

IN THESE TIMES

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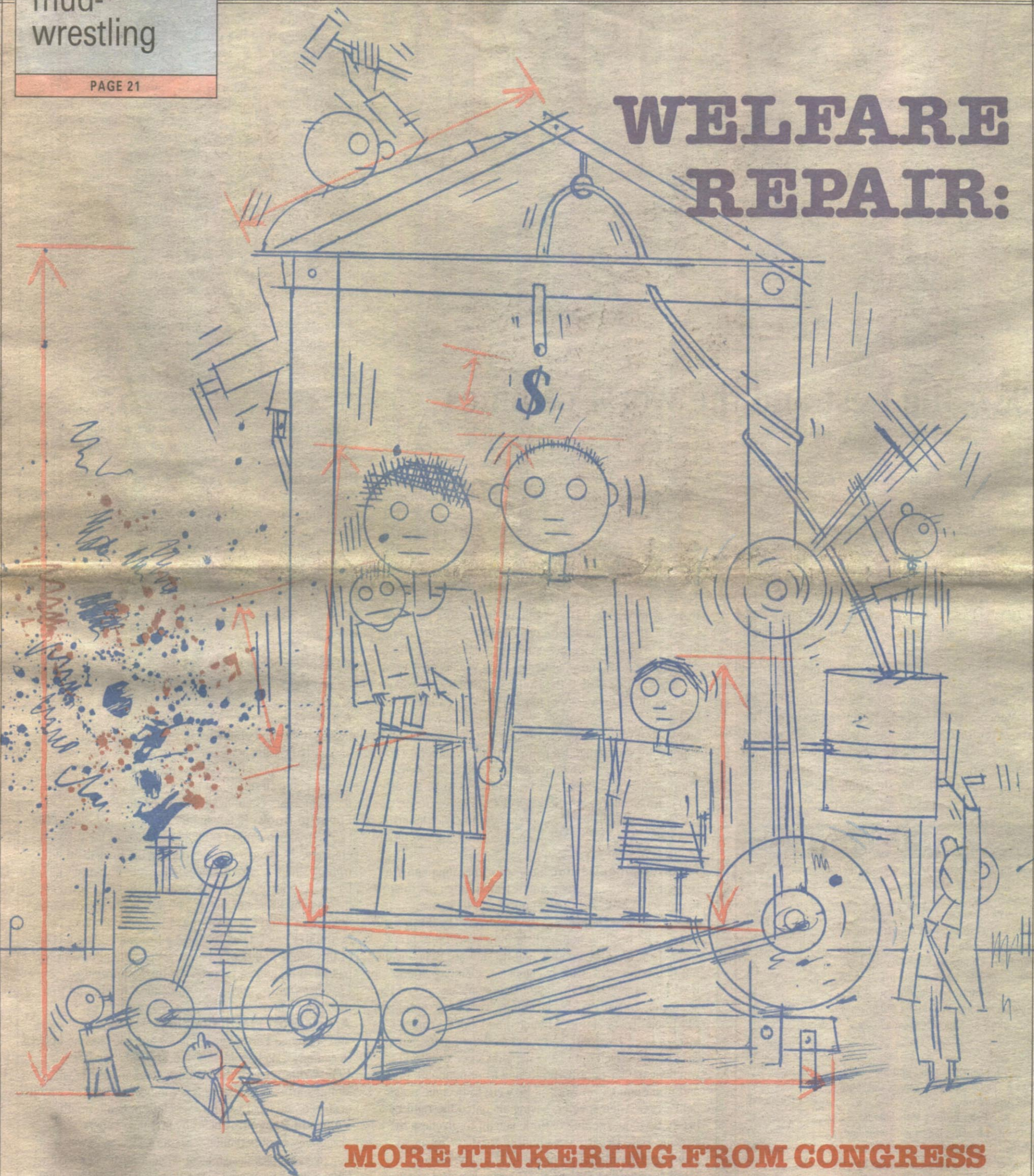
DEC. 23, 1987-JAN. 12, 1988

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First lady
mud-
wrestling

PAGE 21

WELFARE REPAIR:



**MORE TINKERING FROM CONGRESS
WHEN AN OVERHAUL IS NEEDED.**

DAVID MOBERG REPORTS p.3



Sen. Warren Rudman, the "most principled politician" of the year.

1987—the best and the worst of times

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

I offer the following awards and recriminations on the year past in Washington:

Most Principled Politician: New Hampshire Sen. Warren Rudman, vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee that investigated the Iran-contra affair, was one of three Republicans to sign the committee's majority report. Rudman denounced the Republican minority report as "pathetic." The other Republicans who signed the majority report, Virginia's Paul Trible and Maine's William Cohen, were not taking any political risks in doing so because Trible is not running for re-election and Cohen is a moderate in a Republican state. Rudman, on the other hand, has never had a reputation as a moderate, and his base in New Hampshire is among the rabid readers of the far right *Manchester Union Leader*, which throughout the hearings portrayed Rudman as a traitor to the conservative cause. Indeed, during the hearings Rudman consistently steered clear of partisan appeals and kept the committee focused on whether the White House had sub-

verted the rule of law. He reminded Lt. Col. Oliver North that a majority of Americans don't believe that contra aid is "a very good idea." "There is no way you can carry out a consistent policy if 'we the people' disagree with it," Rudman said. "The American people have a constitutional right to be wrong. And what Oliver North thinks or what anybody else thinks makes not a whit if the American people say 'Enough.'"

Most Effective Politician: House Speaker Jim Wright has turned out to be the most effective speaker since Texas' Sam Rayburn. Expected to be more conservative than former Speaker Tip O'Neill, he has been a far more forceful advocate for liberal causes. Last year he called for Congress to reduce the deficit by raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy; and this year Wright's approach was reflected in the House's tax-increase proposals. Last August, having conferred previously with Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, Wright drew the Reagan administration into a peace process, eroding moderates' support for contra aid. Under Wright, the Democrats now have an alternative foreign policy in Central America.... Runner-up: Sen. Sam Nunn, who is proving to be a masterful chairman of the Armed Services Committee, responsible for, among other things, forcing continued administration compliance with SALT II and the strict interpretation of the ABM treaty.

Favorite Organization: People for the American Way has led the battle against administration attempts to stock the judiciary with right-wing cranks and fundamentalist assaults against Darwin and the *Wizard of Oz*. Its strength remains its resolute non-partisanship. Many of its prime contacts around the country and its staff are Republicans put off by the right-wing evangelicals' social agenda.

Bad Ideas: AFL-CIO President George Meany kicked the Teamsters out in 1957 because they were a corrupt union. Thirty-one years and four indicted and jailed Teamster leaders later, Lane Kirkland welcomed them back.... Rep. Jack Kemp, driven out of the Republican center, tried to win over the far-right by promising to re-nominate Bork and to pardon Oliver North if he were to become president.... Sen. Arlen Specter, having alienated the right by his incisive questioning of Bork, sought forgiveness by backing State Department Counsel Abraham Sofaer's fraudulent interpretation of the ABM treaty.

Most Important Debate: "The arms control process is corrupt at its source and corrupting, it is putting us in great danger." —Norman Podhoretz, *Commentary*, May "Well, I think as long as you've got a chance to strive for peace, you strive for peace."

—Ronald Reagan, November 3

Most Mean-Spirited Statement: "With rare exceptions, contracting AIDS is like contracting lung cancer; it requires the collaboration of the victim. That is not true of many other catastrophic illnesses. This does not mean that AIDS victims deserve neither our compassion nor our support. It does mean that those who claim that AIDS victims deserve special compassion and special support have some explaining to do. They have not done it."

—Charles Krauthammer, *Washington Post*, June 12

Flimsiest Rationalization: "If Mr. Reagan had planned a daring gambit to achieve one of the major social goals of his administration, it couldn't have been any more perfect than the scenario that actually happened. 'The Lesson of Ginsburg' will echo throughout America for years to come, and probably become a permanent sentence in our history books. Every young man and woman, boy and girl, now knows the lesson: If you use illegal drugs, even casually, experimentally or socially, it may come back to haunt you 20 years later and cost you the greatest opportunity for career advancement you will ever have."

—Phyllis Schlafly, *Washington Times*, November 12

Success Story of the Year: In November 1986, after Secretary of State George Shultz denounced the sale of arms to Iran, conservatives around Reagan clamored for his ouster. Both the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Times* ran stories predicting his imminent resignation. But one year later Shultz has survived his critics and his opponents within the administration, including CIA Director William Casey and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. He is totally in charge of American foreign policy, and he and his arms control adviser, Paul Nitze, can take substantial credit for American willingness to sign the INF treaty.... Runner-up: Rev. Pat Robertson, who continues to build a formidable political organization in spite of being rightly dismissed as a lunatic by the mainstream media.

Biggest bust of the year: The Democratic race for president has gone beyond farce. None of the candidates has the blend of policy experience, political charisma and the ability to transcend party and interest that it takes to win the presidency and govern effectively. Gary Hart's

INSIDE STORY

withdrawal and re-entry have made it into a comic opera in which the lead character is speared through the chest and carted off the stage, only to reappear in the next act. It now seems possible that, even with a politically vulnerable Republican opponent and a visibly failing economy, the Democrats could again lose 49 states.

Favorite Book: Randy Shilts' *And the Band Played On* (William Morrow and Co.) tells the story of the AIDS epidemic. He spares no one, neither the Reagan administration, which ignored the epidemic, the non-profit blood banks, which were more interested in holding down costs than saving lives, nor the gay liberationists who denounced attempts to stem the epidemic as "homophobic" and "anti-erotic." One imagines a historian doing a book of this scope and depth 30 years after a major event had passed, but Shilts, a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, writes during the epidemic's height and from its storm center.

Article Most Worth Clipping: "Shocks, Deadlocks and Scorched Earth: Reaganomics and the Decline of U.S. Hegemony," Michael Moffitt, *World Policy Journal*, Fall 1987. Written before the October stock market crash, Moffitt's article is nevertheless the best account of why it occurred and what can be expected in its aftermath.

Year-end Peeves: Articles by first-time fathers.... Magazines about parenting.... Nissan's TV ads, in which American yuppies design a car while a Japanese executive lurks in the background.... The *Washington Post Magazine*.... The conspiracy against Beta video cassette recorders.... The degeneration of *Sports Illustrated*, once the best-written magazine in America, into a dizzying carousel of cutesy cleverness.... Profiles of Bruce Springsteen as artist.... Alexander Cockburn and Henry Fairlie.

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By David Moberg

Welfare bill: another patch-up job

LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES ON CAPITOL Hill seemed headed toward a consensus on welfare reform earlier this year. Liberals agreed to emphasize work and family responsibilities for welfare recipients, and conservatives supposedly agreed to provide some federal assistance to make it easier for welfare mothers to find and hold jobs.

But as welfare reform legislation came before the House last week, it was obvious that conservatives were interested simply in clearing the rolls of welfare families quickly and cheaply.

Wrong focus: Yet even the House Democratic reform, the most humane alternative under serious consideration, suffers from the constraints of this new consensus. By focusing on the behavior of the poor rather than poverty and its causes, the consensus provides a looking-glass-world inversion of society that misconstrues both welfare and poverty. The House bill, which was approved last week, would cost over five years an estimated \$4.3 billion to \$5.8 billion, down \$500 million after an amendment by budget-conscious Democrats. The bill would provide increased employment training for the small percentage of welfare recipients who have been on the rolls more than two years; this group makes up the majority of active cases at any given time. It eases the transition to work by providing Medicaid for up to two years and mandating skimpy state-funded child-care aid for up to 12 months. In addition, the current House version revises reductions in aid to working welfare recipients so that they do not lose more in benefits than they make by working—as is now often the case.

Although the bill does not set federal minimum standards or directly raise benefits (which have fallen in real terms by one-third since the early '70s), it makes two-parent families eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 24 states that now bar such aid, and provides some incentive for states to raise payments. It also takes a new stab at collecting child support from absent fathers, by requiring states immediately to begin withholding child support from absent fathers' paychecks, even if they are not behind in payments.

The bill requires women with children over three years old to take part in job training and search programs. This is stiffer than current standards but looser than the Republican alternative of exempting only mothers with children under six months of age. Under the bill women can refuse jobs that pay less than normal wages for the type of work they are offered (unlike an alternative Republican measure). While providing for state experiments, it avoids the Republican option of letting states ignore federal standards on poverty programs under the guise of flexibility and innovation.

The House Democratic bill is far from generous, yet it offers modest reforms. The Republican option would simply have increased pressure to drive women off welfare.

The leading legislation in the Senate, introduced by Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-NY) and co-sponsored already by 57 senators, is more like the House GOP alternative in that it provides for greater state flexibility, less child care and other assistance, and no benefit-level increase. Moynihan's bill focuses

primarily on collecting child-support payments. Indeed, AFDC would be renamed "child-support supplements."

Liberal lobbying groups supported the House Democratic bill for its modest gains, not because they thought it addressed major problems. "Is this going to eliminate poverty or dramatically change the welfare situation?" Robert Greenstein, a welfare lobbyist, said. "Of course not." Even so, Moynihan's bill passes and many of the House provisions survive a House-Senate conference. President Reagan undoubtedly will veto it. But the House bill at least provides a minimal liberal rallying standard, Greenstein argued.

Flawed debate: This points to the fundamental flaw in the entire debate. In recent years conservative critics have attacked welfare for causing poverty, destroying families and discouraging work. Reagan's initial welfare reform proposals last year set the tone: the goal was to get people off welfare.

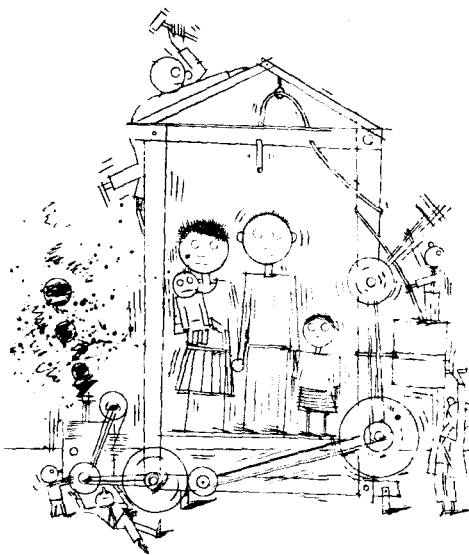
The issue became welfare itself, which, for many different reasons, nobody likes. That is the first great inversion, which might be called the "welfare fetish." What is really a question of relations among people is seen instead as a relationship among things in the market.

Welfare—a shorthand term for AFDC, although the analysis could be extended to other programs—exists because there is poverty. But, as Michael Katz argues in his history, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, the goal of welfare has only minimally been to provide relief; its larger underlying motivations have been to promote social order, discipline the poor and regulate labor markets. American public welfare has a distinctive cast compared to Western European models: It is far less comprehensive, more reliant on private delivery systems and much more geographically varied. Most important, public assistance is "means-tested" and separated from broad social insurance programs, like Social Security and unemployment compensation. That means it is stigmatized and vulnerable. The current welfare reform proposals, even the more generous ones, do not depart from this sad history.

Congress did not ask what it could do to eliminate poverty. It focused not on the economic factors that make people poor, but on the behavior of poor people. Recent poverty trends offer distressing evidence: After declining since the '60s, poverty began increasing in the late '70s and '80. Increasingly, the poor are young women and children (one-fifth of all children—and 43 percent of black children—are poor). More than 40 percent of all poor people over the age of 14 worked last year, but most of them in the low-wage, part-time jobs that have been the major source of new jobs in the '80s.

There is a tendency for many people to conflate "the poor" and "welfare." But the vast majority of women remain on welfare only temporarily before they manage to return to the burgeoning ranks of the working poor. Even more tragic, the poor and welfare tend further to be identified with unwed black mothers in big city ghettos.

Social isolation: The ghetto underclass—conforming to the age-old images of the undeserving, dangerous poor—has indeed grown. As sociologist William Julius



Wilson points out in his new work, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*, the percentage of poor black families headed by women more than doubled to 74 percent in the two decades since 1960; the proportion of black teen-age births out of wedlock also doubled to 89 percent in the same period. These families are most likely to be long-term AFDC recipients. The communities in which they live are more likely to be wracked by crime and to lack job opportunities. They have lost many traditional "social buffers" that provide discipline or inspiration, such as churches, community groups or small businesses—in part because better-educated blacks have benefitted from a decline in racial barriers and moved out of the poor neighborhoods. The result is a kind of social isolation of the poor that yields what Wilson calls "concentration effects," worsening an already bad lot.

Conservatives argue that these poor families were formed because women were enticed by generous welfare payments to have illegitimate children and live off the public rather than get a job. The new welfare reform is intended alternatively to help or whip them out of this dependency, which conservatives claim hurts them far more than the pain of

President Reagan's initial welfare reform proposals last year set the tone of the debate: the goal was to get people off welfare.

being forced to depend on low-wage, part-time jobs.

Throughout recent centuries politicians, preachers and businessmen have chorused that welfare is bad for the poor, as Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward note in *The Mean Season: The Attack on the Welfare State*. Most employers disliked relief not just because of the cost but more because it subverted the ideology of the marketplace and changed the balance of power between workers and their employers. "Efforts to shape relief arrangements so they would not intrude on market relations virtually define the history of social welfare," Piven and Cloward conclude. Relief conflicts thus have al-

ways been at the heart of broader class conflicts—and are again now.

Welfare, unemployment compensation, Social Security or other measures give workers a way of surviving without having to subject themselves to every employer demand. It strengthens workers' bargaining power on the job; they have a "safety net" and do not have to compete with desperately poor workers. As a result, there has been steady pressure to make relief as unattractive as possible in order to make people totally dependent on market vagaries.

Welfare myths: Wilson as well as Piven and Cloward review the voluminous recent literature on the behavior of the poor, and they find that the conservative charges simply are not supported. Welfare does not induce illegitimacy. It may, however, lead young women to form independent households rather than live with their parents, which is probably the main reason for the explosion in AFDC families in the '60s.

The great variation in levels of state payments has, in a sense, been a brutal experiment with the conservative thesis. Harvard poverty researchers Mary Jo Bane and Richard Elwood say. The result: low benefits don't reduce out-of-wedlock births or retard formation of female-headed families. They just make families and children poorer.

The economic incentives of welfare rarely work the way conservatives or liberals predict. Despite significantly declining welfare payments, welfare rolls rose in the '70s. Despite disincentives to work created by Reagan policy changes in the early '80s, few women gave up their jobs for welfare.

Piven and Cloward argue that welfare should provide disincentives to work if it is going to change the balance of power; but they, like Wilson, find that numerous studies show it provides only slight disincentive to work. That is partly because people want to work to participate in society and to give themselves a sense of identity. Also, it is partly because welfare payments are so low: the average annual grant is about \$4,200, roughly half the poverty level for a family of three.

If welfare damages self-esteem and hurts poor people, Piven said, "it's not welfare that's the problem, it's low welfare grants, constricted job opportunities and harassment that are the problems."

Male unemployment: If welfare isn't the cause of increased poverty and social pathology, especially in inner-city black ghettos, what is? Wilson argues that one of the major reasons for the rise in black households headed by women is a dramatic decline in the availability of young black men who avoid being killed or jailed and have jobs—"the marriageable pool." Male joblessness, not welfare, explains the rise in out-of-wedlock births, divorce and comparative failure of black women to remarry. Wilson concludes.

Following his argument, the answer to the problems that have caused so much hand-wringing about welfare is not welfare reform. It is creating more jobs for black men—and women. But the problems of poor black men are not addressed at all in the new consensus, since few are covered by welfare.

Continued on page 22

IN SHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

Mag "The Gag" Thatcher

With an acquiescent court system at her disposal, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has taken government censorship to limits not seen in the "civilized world" since the '40s. Earlier this month the Thatcher administration got a court injunction to stop BBC radio from broadcasting a discussion titled "My Country, Right or Wrong." The show was to have been a debate on the role and accountability of MI5 and MI6, the British secret services. According to *Manchester Guardian Weekly* columnist James Lewis, "Nobody [in the government] pretended that [the program] posed a threat to national security. The gag merely reflected the government's decision that the security services are no longer a subject for legitimate journalistic inquiry." This gag order is a continuance of the repression that began earlier this year when Thatcher, through a court injunction, succeeded in preventing the *Guardian*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* from printing excerpts from *Spycatcher*, the bestselling expose by former MI5 agent Peter Wright that is banned in Britain (see *In These Times*, April 8). As an editorial in Rupert Murdoch's pro-Thatcher *Sunday Times* commented at the time, "We stand gagged and bound hand and foot by restrictions unprecedented in peacetime Britain. We are dealing with a mixture of Whitehall farce and George Orwell's 1984."

MacNews

Who knows but that the dominant press here in the U.S. would be facing similar restrictions were it not for the fact that lap dogs rarely need a muzzle. Take *USA Today*. The nation's colorful daily—flush from this year's Pulitzer for "best paragraph"—is planning to do to TV news what it did to print journalism. Marina Hirsh writes in *Propaganda Review*, a new quarterly that critiques the information industry, that the Gannett Corporation—which for the record is pronounced just like the carrion-eating sea bird—will beam in next fall with a half-hour daily news show that is to fill the gap between *Entertainment Tonight* and the *CBS Evening News*. It promises to be a tight fit.

The right has its eyes on you

A network of "private spies" is at this moment busy investigating people with left-wing views and passing the information they gather to the Justice Department, the FBI and the White House. In a chilling, but ignored three-part expose, Sylvia Chase of San Francisco's KRON-TV reported last month that these spies photographed demonstrations, infiltrate meetings using aliases, and glean names by rummaging around in trash cans. They work for a network of groups that are closely tied to the Reagan administration, groups like the Young America's Foundation, the Council for Inter-American Security, Capital Research Center and the Institute for Contemporary Studies. As Michael Boos, director of Young America's Foundation, explains, the curbs Congress put on domestic surveillance in the '70s crippled the government's ability to monitor the left. So, to compensate for this disability, and at the same time keep within the letter of the law, a privatized network of right-wing spies was pressed into service.

Institute for Contemporary Studies digs trash: Stephen Schwartz, a former member of International Socialists, now works for the Institute for Contemporary Studies (ICT), one of the groups in what he characterizes as a "commie-watching network." ICT was founded by, among other Reagan associates, Attorney General Edwin Meese. Schwartz told KRON-TV's Sylvia Chase that he is in close contact with the National Security Council, that he has briefed a White House audience that included Oliver North and that he had met with the late CIA Director William Casey. Schwartz described the work his group does this way to Chase: "When a left-wing group publishes, say, a list of its state committee and throws it in the garbage and somebody finds it in the garbage and brings it to me, then I know the names of all those people, and sometimes there will be more information." Although Schwartz admits it does happen, he says he does not "believe in" thievery. "That's not fair," he says. What is fair is open perusal. "If any leftist group has an open office where there are a lot of people around, you know you can walk in, and if there is something lying on a desk, you don't have to filch it. You might just write down what's on it—see a list of names or something like that." Schwartz says that there are other people like him who are

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Stick 'em up: The War Resisters League (WRL), as a quiet form of civil disobedience, is urging people to visit toy stores armed with stickers like those shown above. (You can get 40 for \$1 or 1,000 for \$20 from WRL, Box 188, Hampton, CN 06247.) This year WRL has targeted GI Joe by Hasbro with both the stickers and a boycott. But a Hasbro spokesman dismisses the group's actions. "Today's action figures provide a modern extension of the role of toys in enhancing children's play experience.... The reality is that children have played fantasy games of the triumph of good over evil for centuries." As have their leaders.

The ANC kidnap plot—was Britain involved?

When the British government earlier this year arrested—then released—four men who had allegedly plotted to kidnap African National Congress (ANC) leaders in London, the story was given strong play in the European and South African media. But the incident went virtually unreported in the U.S.—an especially surprising fact given allegations that the British government was involved in the plot. In fact, when British officials announced in October that the four were being released for reasons of "insufficient evidence" and "national security," attorneys for the defense were reportedly ready to produce documents that would embarrass the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

The alleged kidnap plan bears all the markings of South Africa's secret service and was being carried out, it appears, with the knowledge—if not the cooperation—of British intelligence. Using an elaborate cover that involved a purported plot to overthrow the leftist government of the Seychelles, an island nation in the Indian Ocean, the conspirators hoped to recruit members of London's exiled Seychellois community. Targets included Solly Smith, the ANC's chief representative in London, and Joe Slovo, formerly second-in-command of the military wing of the ANC.

British intelligence agencies, with longstanding ties to their South African counterparts, have routinely ig-

nored Pretoria's activities in England. In 1982 South African agents were implicated in the firebombing of the ANC's London offices. The following year four of Pretoria's officials were charged with illegal arms trafficking. After being unexpectedly released on bail, the officials flew back to South Africa and the case was dropped.

This latest plot was inadvertently discovered in July when London police, on a stake-out for "homosexual misbehavior," arrested a man calling himself Frank Larsen in a hotel restroom. Larsen, upon being accused of soliciting, produced a Ministry of Defense police identification card, later found to be forged. British officials later determined Larsen was Viggo Oerbak, a Norwegian mercenary who had worked for the Rhodesian army.

A subsequent search of Larsen's home turned up a haul of documents, including a list of ANC members to be kidnapped and their British home addresses. Police also uncovered Foreign Office documents and manuals and Ministry of Defense identification documents. It is still unclear if all of these materials were forged, as the British government has claimed.

This evidence and information obtained from Larsen during police questioning led to the arrests of three other men: John Larsen, who claimed to be Frank's son but was in fact Hans Christian Dahl of Norway; Jonathan Wheatley, a former paratrooper who served in the Falklands; and Evan Dennis Evans, a former RAF officer who served in Rhodesia and worked for South Afri-

can special forces.

Details of the kidnap plan are still sketchy, but according to British press reports it appears that the four were directed by a South African businessman, Johann Niemoller, who allegedly associates with members of Pretoria's intelligence community. He visited England in late 1986 and met with three of the conspirators. Niemoller has told South African newspapers that plots against the ANC were discussed but that he refused to help.

Further implicating the South Africans was the hasty departure of Pretoria's military attache in London, Col. Robert Crowpher, who left after the case was exposed. Crowpher cannot be replaced, as European Community guidelines call for the phased elimination of military ties with Pretoria, and it's a safe bet that he would have been withdrawn only under the most extraordinary circumstances.

The British security services claim no knowledge of any of the accused, however several British papers have reported that Frank Larsen has associated for the past five years with political and military figures, frequently wearing a British military uniform. The British press has revealed that he was also introduced to retired U.S. Gen. John Singlaub, head of the World Anti-Communist League and one of the key players in the Iran-contra affair.

This, and other evidence, has bolstered suspicions that British intelligence was at least aware that South African agents were planning actions in England and did nothing.

to stop them. *The Independent*, a London daily that investigated the case, said it was "almost inconceivable" that British intelligence did not know what Larsen and his cohorts were up to.

The allegations of government in-

Ex-South African prisoner exposes destabilization tactics

HARARE, ZIMBABWE—After spending nearly four years in Pretoria Central Prison, a woman jailed in one of South Africa's most sensational spy cases has arrived in neighboring Zimbabwe. Patricia Hanekom brought with her a wealth of information on the South African covert action agency assigned to undermine this country's government and three other black-led nations.

The gruesome effects of South African destabilization have been widely reported. Most recently, a United Nations Children's Fund study held Pretoria-backed rebels responsible for the deaths of 140,000 children a year in Mozambique and Angola. The report also said that the apartheid state's economic aggression has in the past six years cost black-led nations \$25 billion to \$30 billion.

What Hanekom adds to the picture is an inside look at the day-to-day activities of the secretive Directorate of Special Tasks (DST), the South African Defense Force (SADF) unit that supervises covert wars. Though Hanekom's information dates from before her 1983 arrest with two other young whites, it is important because it reveals the extent to which South Africa controls rebel groups fighting to overthrow neighboring governments.

Hanekom and her husband Derek were arrested in 1983 for helping SADF Cpl. Roland Hunter—then a confidential assistant to the head of DST Col. Cornelius Van Niekerk—pass secret documents on South Africa's covert action programs to the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC, in turn, delivered the documents to the targeted governments.

To keep sensitive material out of the public eye, South Africa tried the Hanekoms and Hunter in secret. They were originally charged with high treason, punishable by death. Under a plea-bargain, they instead received sentences of two to five years for such lesser offenses as possession of a tape recording of ANC President Oliver Tambo with intent to disseminate. In making the deal Pretoria was able to keep defense lawyers from seeing secret documents that had been seized on the Hanekoms' farm near Johannesburg.

Hanekom was freed November 20. A Zimbabwean citizen, she was immediately deported and flown, under police escort, to Harare. Interviewed here the next day, she described the shadowy activities that provoked Hunter to betray SADF secrets:

volvement are not terribly surprising. Thatcher, who recently branded the ANC a "terrorist organization," has been one of Pretoria's staunchest supporters.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecutor's office, which issued the order

covert operations that included assassinations, airdrops of doctored weapons and made-in-Pretoria propaganda blitzes against neighboring countries.

She said that Hunter had been assigned to "Project Mila," an operation that aimed to "overthrow the Marxist-Leninist government of Mozambique and replace it with one more favorable to South Africa." He worked alongside units responsible for similar DST operations against Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Angola. Though South Africa publicly supports UNITA rebels in Angola and has openly sent its army into that country, Pretoria has repeatedly denied charges that it aids rebels in Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Mozambique.

Hunter, said Hanekom, often prepared supplies for airdrops to the MNR (Mozambique National Resistance) in Mozambique. These included new, Czechoslovak-made AK-47 machine guns stored at a South African military warehouse. The guns, stripped of all identifying marks, were obtained by South Africa through an unknown third party, according to Hanekom. As Mozambique's army uses AK-47s, the guns

to drop charges in the kidnap plot, is ready to get on with the trial of three anti-apartheid demonstrators arrested earlier this year for throwing paint at the South African Embassy in London.

—Ken Silverstein

were apparently chosen to make it seem that the MNR captured its weapons from government forces.

Hunter was also responsible for daily delivery of MNR propaganda tapes for broadcast on "the Voice of Free Africa," said Hanekom. Ostensibly transmitted by an MNR radio station inside Mozambique, the programs were actually broadcast from a South African government transmitter in Johannesburg.

Hunter regularly visited three MNR bases in South Africa and was responsible for making monthly salary payments to top MNR officials, said Hanekom. On one occasion in 1983, when MNR President Afonso Dhlakama prepared to lead a delegation from his movement to West Germany, Hunter was given \$2,500 to take them on a clothes-shopping spree in Pretoria.

Hanekom also reported that the assassination of at least one MNR leader, former Portuguese secret police officer Orlando Cristina, was carried out with SADF approval. She explained that, because of factional disputes within the MNR, "a decision was taken by the operation to eliminate him."

—Steve Askin

Now out of prison, Patricia Hanekom meets the press.



"collecting information" and passing it on to government officials. But be happy for small favors: Schwartz adds, "The people in government are not, frankly, able to do anything more with it than simply collect it and keep track of the information."

Capital Research Center infiltrates with Reagan youth:

Former White House Deputy Director of Personnel Willa Johnson has now put her people-managing skills to work as director of Capital Research Center. This right-wing foundation—supported by, among others, Oliver North's contra-funders Joseph Coors and Ellen Garwood—publishes the results of its research. It also supplies data to the White House and Justice Department. One of the group's Capital Research "researches" is CISPES, a left-wing organization that supports the Salvadoran rebels and opposes Reagan administration Central American policy. The group has been the target of numerous break-ins and death threats (see *In These Times*, July 22). KRON's Sylvia Chase attended a CISPES meeting in Washington, D.C., where she caught up with one of Johnson's Capital Research spies—a teen-ager who had come to the meeting, signed in under the name George Matthews and then furiously began taking notes on all that was said. When asked if he was collecting information for Capital Research, as folks suspected, the boy repeatedly answered "no." Paying a visit to the Capital Research Center, Chase learned that the teen-ager worked there as an intern, that his name was not George Matthews and that Johnson had asked him to bring back information on CISPES. Johnson explained to Chase that the youth should have been upfront about his affiliation. That he wasn't, she says, was a "youthful mistake."

Council for Inter-American Security tracks Kremlin stooges:

Council for Inter-American Security chief Michael Waller is secretly keeping track of subversive characters—especially terrorists, communists and other left-wing activists. Waller—shown on the KRON-TV report at a Young Americans for Freedom national convention seated next to Oliver North's secretary Fawn Hall—says his group is "filling a gap not just from what the government is no longer able to or willing to do, but from what the mass media has been unwilling to do." He claims that CIA Director William Casey "was driven to have a brain seizure because of harassment by the liberal media and liberal members of Congress." He also says that Rep. George Crockett (D-MI) was once a communist agent and that Reps. John Burton (D-CA), Ted Weiss (D-NY), Ron Dellums (D-CA), John Conyers (D-MI), Don Edwards (D-CA) and Charles Rangle (D-NY) have secretly collaborated with the KGB. Waller has spoken at the White House and has been cited as an authority in a State Department cable. Former White House Director of Communications Pat Buchanan sits on the board of Council for Inter-American Security. And Waller says another admirer of his group is Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams. "In general, [Abrams] says we're doing a great job and keep up the good work."

Young America's Foundation keeps files of campus left:

"I don't know of any other group that spends the time and the resources monitoring the campus left that we do," brags Michael Boos, director of Young America's Foundation. Boos keeps files, makes lists and takes photographs of left-leaning students and professors. "I took these when they were demonstrating," he says, as he shows KRON-TV's Sylvia Chase a photograph of campus demonstrators. He adds, "A number of them, for some reason, did not want people taking photographs." In 1984 Boos prepared a private report titled, "Left-wing Campus Campaign Against U.S. Policy in Central America." The report lists the names of people who signed petitions, gave speeches and wrote anti-administration editorials. He says his work is supported by and has been read by at least two administration officials. These men are now two of President Reagan's top aides—Ken Cribb, assistant to the president for domestic affairs, and Frank Donatelli, the president's chief political adviser. Both men serve on Young America's board of directors. And President Reagan himself has written a letter of support for Young America's Foundation. This group, like Capital Research Center, gets money from Joseph Coors and Ellen Garwood. It also has received \$100,000 from the State Department's propaganda branch, the U.S. Information Agency. Boos says Young America's Foundation—"the nation's most extensive campus information network"—supplies campus intelligence to the FBI and Justice Department.

A defense secretary with a questionable past

By Jim Naureckas

WHEN FRANK CARLUCCI REPLACED JOHN Poindexter as national security adviser last January, the official consensus was that he was the man who could clean up the mess left by the Iran-contra scandal at the National Security Council (NSC).

"He is a man of great integrity," asserted Stansfield Turner, President Carter's CIA chief, under whom Carlucci served as a deputy.

"A delight," gushed then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, whom Carlucci has worked under in several positions, most recently as No. 2 man at the Pentagon.

Now, less than a year after becoming the savior of the NSC, Carlucci has taken over Weinberger's job, again with the applause of grateful Washingtonians. "We're looking forward to a spirit of cooperation," beamed Sen. James Exon (D-NE) during Carlucci's confirmation hearing. Carlucci was approved by the Senate November 20 on a 91-1 vote, with the lone dissent coming from the far-right Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC).

Since he assumed his post, Carlucci has been getting favorable press as a "moderate." For example, he blocked a hard-line replacement for Richard Perle as the top Pentagon official for arms negotiations. Carlucci is also cutting the 1989 military budget \$6 billion below the 1988 budget recently approved by Congress. *Aviation Week & Space Technology* reported this month that Carlucci plans to cut research on the "Star Wars" missile defense system, as well as such expensive programs as the MX and Midgetman missiles, two new aircraft carriers and the LHX army helicopter.

The *New York Times* summed up its November 6 profile of Carlucci with this quote from a "senior official": "He's much calmer, more realistic and less ideological than Weinberger. And that, by God, is what we need these days."

Despite such an enthusiastic endorsement from the establishment press, however, Carlucci remains a mysterious figure with a murky past and dubious associations. The following unanswered questions should have been asked before Carlucci became the



Secretary of Defense Carlucci has been less than frank about his mysterious career.

latest "moderate," "pragmatic" hero of official Washington.

Why was Carlucci named the deputy director of the CIA in 1978?

It is rare for an outsider to be given this position; it's usually filled by someone with long-term experience inside the agency. Carlucci ostensibly worked for the State Department, in a series of foreign hot-spots, throughout the '50s and '60s. These jobs may or may not have been covers for CIA work. "Everyone knew [Carlucci] was working on the intelligence side," a foreign service veteran told *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, whose spring 1987 issue contains an in-depth analysis of Carlucci's career.

If Carlucci was a CIA agent, was he involved in assassinations?

In 1960, shortly after Carlucci arrived in the Congo (now Zaire), the CIA began plotting to poison Patrice Lumumba, the Congo's left-leaning president, who was later murdered. The Senate's 1975 Church Committee, which documented the assassination plan, said it could find no direct CIA role in the actual 1961 killing. But the CIA's doctrine of "plausible deniability" mandates that agents leave no evidence of their involvement in dirty work. Lumumba's death at the hands of thugs with CIA contacts took place less than a month after a bungled CIA attempt.

Why was Carlucci expelled from Tanzania in 1965?

Because he was plotting to overthrow the government of President Julius Nyerere, Tanzania (then known as the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar) said at the time. Carlucci was asked about this during confirmation hearings on his CIA nomina-

tion. But the question was asked in executive session and the answer remains classified.

How does Carlucci's reputation as a moderate square with his fervent opposition to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?

Carlucci lobbied heavily to get the CIA exempted from FOIA, on the grounds that the act might frighten off U.S. corporations and foreign governments from secretly collaborating with the CIA. His efforts helped

In 1960, shortly after Carlucci arrived in the Congo, the CIA began plotting to poison Patrice Lumumba, the left-leaning president.

defang a tough 1980 intelligence oversight law that in its original form might have prevented some of the constitutional abuses of the Reagan era. Carlucci was also the CIA's chief lobbyist for the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, which made it a felony to publicly reveal names of CIA agents.

Why did Carlucci save Richard Secord's job at the Pentagon?

In 1982, when Secord was under investigation for his alleged role in a plot to defraud millions of dollars from the U.S. government through the EATSCO arms shipping company, the Defense Department suspended him, pending a "lie detector" test. But Carlucci, above Secord in the chain of command, overruled the Pentagon's general counsel and reinstated Secord to his job—overseeing

arms shipments to the Mideast.

Why did Carlucci give another EATSCO suspect a \$200,000 a year job?

In late 1982 Carlucci left the Pentagon for a job in the private sector, becoming president of Sears Roebuck's Sears World Trade. There he hired an ex-Pentagon official, Erich von Marbod, who had resigned when investigators were looking into his links to EATSCO. Author Peter Maas wrote in his book *Manhunt* that intelligence operative Michael Ledeen had earlier told federal prosecutors to lay off von Marbod because the funds swindled by EATSCO may have gone to support covert activities. This may explain Carlucci's fondness for both von Marbod and Secord.

Did Sears hire Carlucci to exploit his Pentagon and intelligence connections?

At the time, the company said it was hiring Carlucci for his "international experience." But he loaded up the company with military officers and Pentagon officials, who made up a strange staff for a trading company—unless it plans to concentrate on the arms trade. Carlucci set up Sears World Trade's consulting subsidiary, the International Planning and Analysis Center, which seemed designed to help its clients win military procurement contracts.

Why does Carlucci continue to come to the defense of scandal-ridden Pentagon officials?

His latest beneficiary was Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Armitage, who was accused last year by the liberal Christic Institute and conservative P.O.W. groups of drug trading and illegal covert operations in Southeast Asia. (Armitage is also linked to Secord and von Marbod—see *In These Times*, July 8.) When billionaire H. Ross Perot added his considerable financial clout to the anti-Armitage forces, *Time* magazine reported May 4 that Carlucci—then national security adviser—asked Perot "to stop pursuing Armitage."

Of course, even if one could corner Carlucci with these questions—preferably under oath—there's no guarantee of getting any direct responses. "He's slimy—not necessarily in the negative sense," says one Washington observer. Carlucci has sat through seven confirmation hearings in 20 years, and he has become a master at deflecting inquiries about a past that continues to have more than its share of shadows.

One more question remains:

Why is Carlucci starting his tenure at the Pentagon with very un-Weinbergeresque budget cuts?

One possibility is that the Republicans need to head off the "bloated military budget" issue before the 1988 election—a task Weinberger, who had a personal attachment to every weapon system, could never have performed.

Another suggestion is that Carlucci might be jockeying for a place in the next administration, whether Republican or Democratic. He has, after all, been nominated to a senior post by every president since Nixon.

But the next president might want to put that nomination on hold—at least until some of the above questions get answered. □

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By Kathryn Phillips

LOS ANGELES

ANYONE IN CONGRESS WHO STILL THINKS clean air doesn't matter much to urban constituents ought to take a look at what's happening among normally smog-tolerant Southern Californians. Their tolerance lately has been waning at such a rapid rate that even regulation-hostile politicians and industrial polluters have had to modify their control-resistant tunes.

In the Los Angeles area, for instance, the threat of new waste incinerators and tire-burning plants has in the last two years brought crowds of people out to scrutinize the state's most important but frequently overlooked air pollution regulatory agency, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

And last June, no sooner had voters finished passing a statewide proposition to stop water pollution (despite heavy industry spending to defeat the measure) than clean air activists started talking loudly about trying a similar tactic.

Los Angeles has known for more than four years that it will not be able to meet clean air standards by the December 31 deadline set in the federal Clean Air Act. Santa Monica environmentalist Mark Abramowitz has responded with two lawsuits. In early November he won a decision from a federal appeals court requiring the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enforce the deadline. Yet less than two weeks later, EPA chief Lee Thomas announced that he would extend the act's deadline for non-complying cities. He effectively removed the federal threat of strict sanctions. Thomas' action angered and disappointed environmentalists and air pol-

The latest fad in California is clean air consciousness

lution control agency heads around the country who said the threat of sanctions was a useful weapon for them to use when imposing stricter pollution controls. In late November, Abramowitz filed notice that he intends to sue EPA again, this time to force it to create a stringent air pollution control plan for the Los Angeles basin.

Double reaction: The Democrat-controlled California legislature has reacted to the public's heightened interest in air quality with a slew of air pollution bills. A few have even made it past the environmentally weak Republican governor.

The AQMD has reacted by reorganizing itself—in part under legislative mandate—and taking a new, potentially politically volatile direction in its efforts to control pollution. This new direction is worth paying attention to. Since at least 60 metropolitan areas around the country, including Los Angeles, will fail to meet the Clean Air Act's deadline, they may be forced to follow the AQMD's new approach.

Historically, the AQMD has focused on controlling pollution from large industrial sources, including oil refineries and utilities. The result has been a decrease in pollution, but the Los Angeles basin still violates air quality standards more than 140 days a year. Now the agency has begun to listen to clean air activists who have long said that that tactic isn't enough.

Manufacturing and refineries produce 17

and 9 percent respectively of the four-county Los Angeles air basin's pollutants, not nearly as much as automobiles emit. Autos are responsible for 39 percent of the area's air pollutants and trucks contribute 18 percent. In light of these figures and growth projections that see the basin's population increasing by 45 percent in 20 years, it seemed clear that something had to be done to attack a life-

ENVIRONMENT

style that encouraged unlimited use of pollution-spewing, gasoline-powered cars.

Yet two years ago, the AQMD board, composed mostly of elected city and county officials from the agency's four-county jurisdiction, including L.A., balked at such a notion and defeated a regulation to do just that. Anything that threatens constituents' attachment to cars has always been a political hot potato in Southern California. Nevertheless, clean air activists along with trash incinerator opponents, who had evolved into experts on air pollution, were demanding cleaner air.

"I think what has changed is that the board is aware the public is going to kick the hell out of them if they don't do something," said Larry Berg, a political scientist and veteran air quality activist who sits on the board.

The commuter rule: On an unseasonably smoggy day earlier this month (yes, even smog has seasons, and here it runs from April through October) the normally indeci-

sive AQMD board unanimously adopted a regulation nearly identical to the one they had rejected two years earlier. The new rule requires companies with 100 or more employees to create transportation plans and provide incentives to encourage employees to voluntarily share transportation, or bicycle or walk to work.

The rule will affect at least 8,000 businesses and 3.5 million regular commuters. If it works it could cut morning traffic by 25 percent and bring the average number of people per car up from 1.1 to 1.5. But it's an ambitious increase considering the inadequate public transportation and the sprawling nature of the Los Angeles basin.

The oil industry and utilities, historically the loudest opponents of pollution controls in the Los Angeles basin, appeared delighted to have the regulatory attention off of them and endorsed adoption of the new rule.

Air quality activists' response to the vote ranged from skeptical pleasure to unabashed enthusiasm.

"I think it's the first sign, the concrete sign, that the politicians are responding to the public's concern about air pollution," said John White, a Sierra Club lobbyist. The key now, he said, will be to keep the momentum going to push for things like conversion of company fleet cars to cleaner alternative fuels such as methanol—something oil companies oppose.

One way of doing that, some air quality activists say, is to keep alive the threat of running a statewide clean air initiative. Yet such an initiative isn't likely to surface until 1990, when the state has gubernatorial elections. By then, some of the air activists hope, a new federal clean air act or a strong state clean air act will make it unnecessary. □

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Disagreements on democracy mean ruin for national dialogue



Nicaraguan women in front of a Sandinista poster: Is there room for other parties?

By William Gasperini

MANAGUA

HOPES FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN Nicaragua's increasingly polarized political forces dimmed considerably when 14 opposition parties withdrew from the "national dialogue" in mid-December. The move came after the Sandinista government balked at considering demands for constitutional reforms.

Dialogue with the "unarmed opposition" is a major element of the Central American peace plan. But the dialogue's difficulties stem largely from differing interpretations

over precisely what is stipulated in the regional peace treaty signed in August, in particular the clause related to "democratization."

Technically, the treaty calls for promotion of an "authentic, pluralist and democratic

NICARAGUA

process" with all parties to enjoy full organizing privileges. The accord also requires complete press freedom and an end to the 1982 state of emergency.

The opposition parties acknowledge they

can now hold open public meetings and marches. But the government has conditioned lifting of emergency and enforcing a general amnesty on an end to U.S. contra aid. The Sandinistas stress the need for other countries—particularly Honduras—to take simultaneous steps for full implementation of the accords. And while both major opposition media outlets, *La Prensa* and *Radio Catolica*, reopened and now function without prior censorship, other broadcast outlets remain closed. Many have applications to reopen pending.

The central issue: It is in the national dialogue where the "democratization" issue has been central. Since October the dialogue has served as a platform for opposition demands to reform the constitution, passed last year after a two-year elaboration process.

The package of 17 proposed reforms includes limiting the president to one term and disallowing familial succession. Most important, the reform proposals seek to unravel the "trilogy" of state-party-army control by the Sandinistas and assure an independent judiciary.

While the government claims such reforms are not stipulated under the regional peace treaty, the opposition says they are implicit. "It is necessary to reform the constitution to create a political climate that guarantees the full pluralism called for in the [peace] plan," said Luis Sanchez of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, one of three leftist groups joining 11 center-right parties in making the demands.

The Sandinistas responded to such demands by saying some of the points could be discussed; others, such as limiting presidential powers, could only be handled in the National Assembly. But the Sandinistas enjoy a clear majority in the assembly and have

consistently defeated attempts to pass the reforms there.

The impasse also results from a fundamental contradiction—some call it confusion—over the true meaning of basic concepts such as political power and democracy.

A matter of definition: The Sandinistas remain firm in their belief that the majority of Nicaraguans are behind them, and stress that the "revolutionary power" won in the overthrow of Somoza is not subject to discussion.

"I am sure the people will never vote for any party," Daniel Ortega told a crowd of Sandinista union leaders last week. "But in the hypothetical case that another party were to win, we would hand over the government, but never power." Ortega apparently meant that the mandate of the 1979 revolution would not end.

The contradictions also center on defining "democratization." Sandinista Commander Carlos Nunez, moderator of the dialogue, claimed what the opposition parties want is a return to the "democracy of the past, where people live in misery and national sovereignty belongs to foreigners."

"For us democracy is not just the right of political parties to hold public demonstrations," Nunez said. "Democracy is the right of *campesinos* to own land, participation of workers in the factories, military service, the liberation of women, children in schools, peace and national sovereignty."

But the opposition parties claim a lack of political space on the Sandinistas' part exacerbates the highly charged atmosphere created by the contra war. They say no true space will be possible without easing the Sandinista grip on political control.

William Gasperini is *In These Times'* correspondent in Nicaragua.

Red-baiting Colombian style: a hit list for right-wing killers

By Merrill Collett

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

AS IF TO PINPOINT NEW TARGETS FOR right-wing assassins, an elaborate anti-communist document published here recently identifies leftists it claims are part of a Soviet plot against Colombia. The authors of the carefully prepared report are not known, but its publication lends credence to the thesis that the political killings in Colombia are the work of a well-organized conspiracy rather than the isolated acts of local paramilitary groups (see *In These Times*, Nov. 4).

Colombia is engulfed in a wave of assassinations. Some 500 of the victims have been members of the leftist Patriotic Union (UP) party, which was founded two years ago by guerrillas of the Soviet-line Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces. The UP says its murdered members died in a dirty war directed by military officers and right-wing businessmen, but authorities have tended to pass off the murders as the results of purely local disputes.

The country's endemic criminal violence has also obscured the political nature of the slayings. And President Virgilio Barco has been slow to recognize the existence of a coordinated campaign to exterminate the

left. But Barco's position became less tenable with the publication of "Violated Sovereignty: The USSR in Colombia." Impeccably typeset and attractively laid-out, the 65-page booklet is a well researched document that required both a high level of counterintelligence and a coordinated effort to print and distribute it to the nation's news media.

"Violated Sovereignty" is a classic piece of black propaganda: it turns reality upside down and attributes the dirty war to communists, when in fact it is unarmed leftists

HUMAN RIGHTS

who are suffering the most from the recent political violence. The document's second goal is to "name names," which it does with an academic thoroughness that Sen. Joe McCarthy never had. In detailing the activities of unions, university groups, human rights organizations, political movements and communications media, it singles out dozens of activists, journalists, academics and clerics it says are "useful idiots of Moscow" and "multipliers of Marxism and revolution."

Such charges can be fatal: Many people have died after their names appeared

on death lists that accused them of leftist sympathies. The most infamous list, published in August, contained the names of 34 of Colombia's best-known journalists, human-rights workers, political dissidents, artists and attorneys. Two of those named—internationally respected human-rights advocate Dr. Hector Abad Gomez and UP President Jaime Pardo Leal—were subsequently shot down.

"Violated Sovereignty" goes far beyond simply listing names. It gives an ideological rationale for the slaughter by linking those listed with "the international communist movement, directed from Moscow through Havana and Managua."

In the familiar vocabulary of the National Security Doctrine—the bible of Argentina's dirty war—the document sets out to prove that Colombia is under siege by the Soviets. It then names the people and organizations it claims comprise a Soviet fifth column.

"It links us to the ELN (National Liberation Army)," said Guillermo Segovia, managing editor of the left-wing Catholic monthly *Solidaridad*. "Do you know what that means? That's a death sentence."

A new document names dozens of Colombian leftists. "That's a death sentence," says one.

With the October 11 murder of Pardo, Colombia's most important leftist politician, even members of Colombia's tightly knit power structure began to worry that democracy would be the next casualty. "This has gone too far," said Hernando Santos, editor of the Bogota newspaper *El Tiempo*, which speaks for the country's elites. "You can't stand all these killings all the time."

"Violated Sovereignty," which came out three weeks after Pardo's death, is seen by many as an attempt to firm up support within ruling circles for the dirty war.

While no one knows for certain who authored the document, the best guess is that it is a spin-off from a closed-door conference held in May that pulled together right-wing politicians, retired generals, conservative industrialists and media magnates. The moving force behind the meeting was the MOIR, a group of rabidly anti-Soviet Maoists who have shifted to the extreme right. During years of sectarian struggle, MOIR members must have accumulated exactly the kind of inside information that makes "Violated Sovereignty" a "Who's Who" of the Colombian left. There are other coincidences. The conference called itself the National Salvation Front, and there are many references to "salvation" in "Violated Sovereignty." The document urges its readers to "react to save Colombia" and calls for an "authentic crusade of salvation to halt Soviet expansion."

Merrill Collett is a Venezuelan-based freelance journalist.

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

IN SPAIN, PEACE ACTIVISTS RELEASED DOVES TO celebrate the historic Reagan-Gorbachov agreement to scrap intermediate range nuclear missiles. The doves were gray, symbolizing uncertainty.

Although the December 8 Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement concerned primarily the arms race in Europe, Europeans were uncertain what it meant, partly because it was made without their involvement. This fact was felt most acutely among leaders who had just been unable to agree on the budget of the European Economic Community, which enters 1988 unfunded. Except for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, ecstatic at having been brought into the act by Mikhail Gorbachov's stopover in London, Western European leaders seemed to be feeling uncomfortably insignificant.

Both NATO officials who had fought for the Euromissiles and some peace activists who had spent years protesting seemed wary that this was a trap to disarm them prematurely.

Austrian writer Robert Jungk, a leading figure in the German peace movement for his warnings against "the nuclear state," called the Reagan-Gorbachov summit "the beginning of an alliance of two technocratic superpowers." Comparing this to the 1915 "Holy Alliance" of Europe's big powers against the ideas of the French revolution, Jungk said the "Technocrats' Alliance" could not stop the advance of liberation among peoples of the Third World.

The mood of the NATO establishment was typified by the Netherlands' prime minister, Ruud Lubbers. A couple of years ago Lubbers got parliamentary approval of cruise missile deployment by promising to phase out Dutch "nuclear tasks"—missions using nuclear weapons—within NATO. He said then that the Dutch would discontinue operations with nuclear-armed F-16 fighter planes and Orion sea patrol aircraft armed with nuclear depth charges.

But the very day Reagan and Gorbachov signed the INF treaty, Lubbers was back promising that the Netherlands would continue all its "nuclear tasks."

The NATO establishment was focused on "filling the hole" in Western defenses that will supposedly be opened by removal of Pershing II and cruise missiles.

Interpretations differed depending on whether focus was on counting missiles or on sensing the historic turning point.

Italian enthusiasms: Nowhere are people more sensitive to historic changes in the wind than in Italy. And nowhere was the Reagan-Gorbachov summit and the signing of the INF treaty greeted with such exuberant celebration as the start of a new era.

Italians, who have long since been fed up with the Cold War, love Gorbachov for being smart and tenacious enough to have brought reality and common sense into Ronald Reagan's fantasy world.

Italian television gave the summit constant coverage, with link-up to the Sicilian town of Comiso whose inhabitants didn't get the prosperity promised from the missile base built there. Comiso celebrated with fireworks and sent Reagan and Gorbachov the message "Comiso peace prizes."

Yet there were some sour notes. The secretary of Italy's Christian Democratic party, Ciriaco De Mita, was darkly reminded of "Munich." His gloom was understandable. A new era of detente could reduce the power of his party quite considerably.



ARMS CONTROL

Many Italians greeted the Reagan-Gorbachov summit as the start of a new era.

Europe reacts to INF treaty with uncertainty

As Reagan was getting ready to greet Gorbachov, the Socialist mayor of Milan, Paolo Pillitteri, pulled off a political switch that may well be symptomatic of rapid Italian adaptation to the new age—especially since Pillitteri is the brother-in-law of Italian Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi. Pillitteri abruptly announced that he was abandoning the Christian Democrats, with whom he has been governing Italy's economic capital for four years, in order to form a new coalition with the Communists and the Greens. The new "red-green" city hall will emphasize improving Milan's urban environment.

The Italian Communist Party's (PCI) new leader, Achille Occhetto, had previously announced that the PCI was following the Socialists in giving priority to institutional reform and in adopting a similar swing attitude toward coalition alliances. That is, the Communists will consider entering alliances with either the Socialists or the Christian Democrats.

The polarization of the Reagan era seems to be giving way to the pragmatism and *perestroika* of the Gorbachov era.

German concerns: In West Germany the INF's "double zero" option was desired by an overwhelming majority of the population. But there is unfinished business: the thousands of short-range "battlefield" nuclear missiles left on German soil—East and West—that, if used, would destroy Germany. From left to right, with a few exceptions, Germans want a "third zero option" to get rid of all nuclear weapons on German soil.

One of the rare West German fans of nuclear weapons is Defense Minister Manfred Wörner, who persists in advocating "modernization" of nuclear weapons as well as a conventional buildup. Wörner has just been picked to succeed Lord Carrington as secretary general of NATO. Does this mean his hard line will prevail? The Social Democratic Party's foreign policy spokesman Karsten Voigt, asked this question by an Italian daily, retorted that Chancellor Helmut Kohl had "sent Wörner to Brussels to get rid of him."

This leaves unsettled the question of how West German anti-nuclear feelings will manage to influence NATO, where the U.S. and

Britain reject a "third zero option" and insist that the next disarmament steps must concern intercontinental missiles and Warsaw Pact conventional forces.

Protesters continued to bear witness outside the Pershing II base at Mutlangen in southern Germany. Mutlangen's Mayor Peter Seyfried said, "We will not be relieved until the missiles are really gone, in two or three years." Local people are still afraid of an accident during transfer of the nuclear missiles through narrow village streets.

Longtime peace activist and former Green Bundestag member Roland Vogt called the INF accord a "success of the peace movement and mankind as well. If it is actually carried out, it will be the first time in history that disarmament is the result of negotiations and not of war."

Vogt noted that it was not right to belittle the agreement by saying that it removed only 3 or 4 percent of nuclear weapons worldwide. "It's not the quantity but the quality that counts," said Vogt. "That is what we in the peace movement said, when we opposed the Pershing II missiles as potential first-strike weapons. It is not fair now to say, well, they are only 3 or 4 percent."

The next challenge to the peace move-

Most European leaders seemed to be feeling uncomfortably insignificant.

ment will be the projects for autonomous West European armament. A group in Britain has been studying the idea of a "European corps" that would go beyond the projected "Franco-German brigade" to bring other European NATO allies into a common force, outside NATO but under the Western European Union (WEU). This WEU force would have its own Rapid Deployment Force to protect European interests in the Third World.

The problem that needs to be studied, according to Vogt, is that the dynamic of disarmament between the two big powers feeds

the impulse for armament in Europe. This has to do with the arms industry, he observed. Can the armament fraction be isolated in capitalism, he asks. Vogt sees the need for a new discussion of conversion from militarism to what he likes to call "civilianism."

In his own state of Rhineland Palatinate, the economy is very dependent on U.S. military bases. People hate the noise of low-flying planes, but need the jobs. "People are natural allies of a European army to replace the U.S. soldiers that will be withdrawn, unless we prepare a program of regional conversion," Vogt said. "We need a new civilian *perestroika*."

French grumbling: From the French media, it was hard to feel what was happening. French conservative editorialists compared the Reagan-Gorbachov agreement to "Yalta" and "Munich." To comment on the signing, the main French TV channel TF1 invited a former president of the World Anti-Communist League, retired Belgian Gen. Robert Close.

Naturally, Close stressed that the accord strips NATO of "the only weapons that served deterrence" and leaves Europe practically defenseless in the face of the "enormous" superiority of the Soviet Union. Gen. Close was voicing the line of the right that, stripped naked by the INF agreement, Western Europe must build up its own forces. But even this ardent anti-communist seemed to perceive a trend toward disarmament. He noted that population decline, financial constraints and anti-nuclear public opinion all posed obstacles to a European military buildup.

Therefore, he concluded, "we are on the eve of another double decision" whereby NATO will both decide to strengthen its conventional forces and negotiate with the Soviets.

The French establishment fears, rightly enough, that the French nuclear deterrence force risks losing its value (essentially political) in an ongoing process of nuclear disarmament. But France cannot stand against the general trend, if that is what it is.

President François Mitterrand seems to have decided to sail with the prevailing winds. Amid the chorus of conservative wailing, Mitterrand said that the choice was between disarmament and over-armament, and came out for pursuing the process of disarmament. There are signs that French Socialist leaders are beginning to see disarmament as an issue they could use against the right in next spring's presidential elections. □

By Arthur R. Kroeber

BHOPAL, INDIA

BEBI IS 18 YEARS OLD, AND SHE LIVES WITH her mother, six brothers and two sisters in two rooms with mud-plastered brick walls and a leaky roof. Bebi's family has always been poor, but until three years ago they managed to make ends meet with the daily wages her father, two elder brothers and husband earned as laborers.

Then, on the night of Dec. 3, 1984, terror visited their crowded slum in the form of a

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cloud of deadly methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas that leaked from the Union Carbide pesticide plant a little over a mile away. People rushed blindly out of their houses—"It was like having hot pepper in your eyes," said one of Bebi's neighbors—and ran as far away from the gas as they could get.

When Bebi and her neighbors returned to their homes a few days later, their lives had changed forever. Bebi's father was sick: He had a burning cough and had trouble breathing, and he couldn't work. He remained bedridden for two years, then died.

The children were all sick; Bebi herself lost weight, also experienced breathing problems, and could work for only an hour or two at a time. Her husband, displeased by her deteriorating health, moved out and divorced her.

A few months ago Bebi's eldest brother, who is 24, was diagnosed as having tuberculosis; he can no longer work. The family of 10 must now make do on her other elder brother's wages of 80 cents a day and the little money her mother makes by working in a government handicrafts program.

A legacy of terror: Like some lingering disease, the Bhopal gas leak continues to torment its victims after three years, and doctors and activists in this city of 400,000 fear that the effects of the world's worst industrial accident will continue for years to come. About 1,700 people died immediately after the leak, and 1,000 more have died of MIC-related illnesses since. Many families have lost their main wage-earners, and many others have seen their incomes cut by half.

As the incident's third anniversary drew near, hopes grew that a settlement would be reached in the 32-month legal wrangle between the Union Carbide Corporation of Danbury, Conn., and the Indian government, which is representing the victims. There was talk of Union Carbide paying out between \$500 and \$650 million. Although this figure was far short of the \$3 billion claimed by India, it would provide much-needed medicines, hospital beds and job training for the estimated 69,000 severely affected victims.

But on November 18 lawyers for the two sides told M.W. Deo, the Bhopal judge hearing the case, that negotiations had broken down and there would be no settlement.

Last week, however, Judge Deo, saying that "attempts at an overall settlement appear to have bogged down," ordered Union Carbide to pay \$270 million in interim relief to Bhopal victims within two months. Earlier in the week lawyers for lobbying groups representing the victims had demanded \$770 million in interim payments. Nevertheless, Vepa Sarthy, the Indian government's attorney, called Deo's decision an "excellent judgment."

Indian intellectuals and activists had been calling for some type of interim payments as the first part of a suggested three-step

गैस दुर्घटना में लापता मृतक



More than 2,700 have died as a result of the poison gas leak.

For Bhopal's victims the agony continues

resolution of the lawsuit. In an open letter last month, 40 prominent figures said the second step should be for the Bhopal court to decide the question of liability, independent of the damage claim. Only then should the court take the final step of fixing the amount of damages.

"This litigation is crucial not only for the Indian government but for the entire Third World," argued one of the signatories, Upendra Baxi, a professor at the Indian Law Institute in New Delhi.

"For the first time the Indian government is pursuing the question of the liability of the multinationals who engaged knowingly in hazardous activities," said Baxi, arguing that an immediate settlement would be a sell-out of India's responsibility to hang the legal liability for the accident on Union Carbide.

The question of liability is not just a technicality, Baxi insisted, because "we are all potential victims of industrial accidents." A finding against Union Carbide might encourage other Third World countries to be more hard-nosed in negotiating contracts with multinationals, and those corporations might use stricter safety standards if they knew they could be held liable for accidents.

Proponents of an immediate settlement, however, point to the suffering of families like Bebi's and say it has gone on long enough. Although the national and local governments have spent more than \$110 million on medical relief and employment programs in the last three years, even government officials concede it has not been enough.

Bhopal's nine government-run hospitals and dispensaries in gas-affected areas treat 4,800 patients daily; another 1,000-1,200 visit four Red Cross dispensaries set up in 1985.

Most patients come back month after month with the same symptoms, according

to Red Cross doctor J.P. Choudhary. These include burning in the throat and eyes, severe coughing and difficulty breathing. Many suffer from pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable and often fatal clogging of the lungs with fibrous tissue.

"People are still dying, because the gas did permanent damage to their lungs," said Choudhary. "We usually give them antibiotics, and the symptoms go away for a while, but then they reappear." Many patients will need medical care for the rest of their lives.

Aside from illnesses directly caused by MIC, doctors have to cope with a large increase in such respiratory diseases as tuberculosis and pneumonia, Dr. Choudhary said. And a recent study by a Bombay medical group found that the rate of spontaneous abortions among pregnant women in Bhopal shot up from 9 percent in 1984 to 31 percent in 1985.

The magnitude of these problems has led some to oppose a settlement on purely

The Indian government's legal strategy focuses on pinning liability on Union Carbide.

monetary grounds. Alok Pratap Singh, the leader of the main gas victim's association, has been lobbying the government for three years to provide free lifelong medical treatment for the gas-affected, employment programs for the disabled and full welfare benefits for those who are unable to work. He estimates this will ultimately cost \$7 billion. "So you can decide for yourself whether \$600 million is sufficient," Singh said.

Singh stressed that the quality of medical care is poor. "People complain of headaches,

so they give you aspirin. If someone has been continuously suffering from headaches for three years, for three years they have continuously been giving them aspirin. Is this medical treatment?"

He also criticized government job-training programs, which officials say have benefitted about 2,500 people, for leaving their participants high, dry and jobless after the three- or six-month training period.

Government takes charge: The victims have been shortchanged both because India's resources are limited and because the government's legal strategy has been focused on pinning liability on Union Carbide and resisting aid from outside. The government established itself, by an act of Parliament in 1985, as the sole representative of the gas victims (cutting out ambulance-chasing lawyers who rushed to the scene within days of the leak). Then, declining to sue merely Union Carbide's Indian subsidiary, which operated the plant, India filed suit in U.S. federal court in New York against the American parent company, which owns 50.9 percent of the shares in Union Carbide of India Ltd.

India fought to keep the case in the U.S. courts, where it felt it had a better chance of winning its \$3 billion claim. But the federal judge, John F. Keenan, ruled in May 1986 that the case should be tried in India, a decision upheld by a three-judge appeals panel and, last summer, by the U.S. Supreme Court. Negotiations for a settlement apparently began soon after the Supreme Court judgment.

Baxi and others approved of this strategy because they felt it important for the parent multinational, and not just the local subsidiary, to be held accountable. But Baxi feels that India has retreated too quickly and succumbed to pressure for immediate relief.

The Indian government's position on the question has been curious. When Judge Keenan asked Union Carbide in April 1985 to give \$5 million for immediate relief in Bhopal, Carbide agreed in two days, but it took the Indian government until November to approve the release of this money to the Indian Red Cross. A private vocational center set up in Bhopal was forced to close down last year after it was discovered that its funds came from Union Carbide. And a 21-year-old Englishman who raised \$10,000 in contributions by bicycling from Britain to Bhopal, was arrested last year and forced to leave the country after he tried to channel the money into relief work.

The reason for this attitude, said N.K. Singh, a leading Bhopal journalist, is twofold: the government fears relief might give Union Carbide help in the public-relations war, and it fears the political consequences.

"Even at the very beginning it would have been unpopular to take money from Carbide," Singh said. "Why? Because Union Carbide had destroyed our city, that's why. How can you take money from someone who's just destroyed your city? People want compensation, not charity."

Yet interviews with gas victims in Bhopal's slums suggest that what people want is money, regardless of what the label on the envelope says. But having waited so long, they are skeptical it will ever arrive.

"My mother-in-law was waiting for a claim form," related Banobi, a 50-year-old woman. "She waited a long time. Two months ago she died. Now the claim form has arrived. By the time the money comes half the people here will be dead."

Arthur R. Kroeber is a journalist based in New Delhi.

El Salvador



Transcending the stalemate

By Jan Knippers Black

SALVADORAN PRESIDENT JOSE NAPOLEON Duarte recently announced that he has evidence linking his arch enemy on the right, Roberto D'Aubuisson, to the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero. News? Not to anyone who has followed the Salvadoran tragedy since the beginning of the decade.

The "news" is that the president chose this time to make a public accusation. D'Aubuisson's crimes have not normally been a topic for open discussion by figures public or private who value longevity.

D'Aubuisson has charged that Duarte raised the issue at this time to bolster his government in the face of the recent visit by exiled opposition leaders. Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) President Guillermo Manuel Ungo and Vice President Ruben Zamora (see accompanying story on page 12). That may not be far off the mark. It may be, however, that Duarte and his fellow Christian Democrats sense that the time is right to disavow their Faustian bargain with the oligarchy and the security forces, and forge a new alliance with the center-left—the only alliance that holds promise of fostering peace in El Salvador.

It seems too much to hope that the peace plan drawn up by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias and signed on August 7 by all five Central American presidents might actually break the stalemate in El Salvador's fratricide. The death squads—usually members of the security forces—issued their commen-

tary on the peace plan in late October, after the government's second meeting with rebel representatives, by murdering Herbert Ernesto Anaya, the highly respected president of the Salvadoran Human Rights Commission. But the return of FDR leaders Ungo and Zamora is a bold rebuttal to the death squads and their sponsors and a reaffirmation of the irrepressible spirit of the Salvadoran people. That spirit was revealed abundantly to this reporter on a visit to El Salvador earlier this year.

Outing to Guazapa: In the early morning a crowd of 50 people, mostly women, gathered outside the gates of the headquarters of the Salvadoran army's 1st Battalion. Their stories were similar: a son or husband or brother had just been "recruited" into the military. That morning or the evening before, as he left the house or his workplace or stood at the bus stop, he was seized by the army.

The leathery face of one older woman was streaked with tears. Four of her five sons had already succumbed to the carnage, and now the military had taken her youngest.

Thus have El Salvador's armed forces grown from some 12,000 in 1979, at the beginning of this round of blood-letting, to 52,000 today. This swelling of the public payroll might have been devised to relieve unemployment, estimated at 40 to 60 percent. But selective service it is not. Kidnapping does not allow for screening out those who are the sole survivors or sole supporters of families. In fact, preying on bus stops at rush hour seems to target men already employed.

Some could only hope that their missing

family members had been conscripted by the army: all they knew was that they had disappeared, and, at a time of relative calm in the city, recruitment seemed the likeliest explanation.

Inside the locked gates, new recruits, self-conscious and awkward, stumbled through a drill. Outside a parade of armed men and boys came and went—a few in plain clothes, including two who looked like U.S. advisers, in new Nissan vans. Most drove by in trucks, sporting camouflage and combat gear and clicking the safety catches on their rifles as they passed.

More disconcerting were the National Guardsmen who assumed seemingly choreographed positions, slouching against walls or cars or trees, staring and playing with their submachine guns. The group's commander said they were waiting for supplies. He went on to boast that he had been trained in the U.S., and that he hoped to go back soon for more advanced training.

At one point the gates swung open and about 20 boys, grinning from ear to ear, dashed out, scattered and disappeared down the converging streets and alleys. Bystanders said that they were the lucky ones who had flunked the physical.

Into the zone: Our group of 18, on a visit organized by the U.S.-based Faculty Committee for Human Rights in El Salvador and Central America, waited for permission to venture into a "conflicted zone" to visit El Barillo, a recently repopulated community on the slopes of the Guazapa volcano. Clearance finally came through after two and a half hours, and our journey began.

The first army checkpoint was only a few miles outside of San Salvador at a bridge called Las Guaras, three times blown up by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and reconstructed. And at this bridge three years ago *Newsweek's* John Hoagland was shot and killed, reportedly caught in cross fire. While we waited, a bus heading into the city was stopped and unloaded, its passengers carefully searched.

From that point on we were in a "conflicted zone." The approximately one-third of the country that in 1983-84 had been known as the "controlled zones"—controlled, that is, by the FMLN—is no longer controlled in the same sense. The "professionalized" Salvadoran armed forces move relatively freely throughout the country—at least during the day.

There had been a skirmish along the road earlier in the day, and from the Guaras bridge checkpoint on we could hear gunfire and see helicopters swooping like giant birds of prey. As we moved along the bursts of gunfire grew louder and more frequent and the helicopters hovered closer to the scorched earth. The ruins of adobe and mud-and-wattle huts, their thatched roofs burned off, were already being reclaimed by the impatient jungle. They might have been vestiges of some earlier civilization, except that they still smelled of smoldering embers. Here and there new fires burned.

Despite the primitive state of the road that climbs the back side of Volcan Guazapa, the drive from San Salvador to the community of El Barillo should have taken no more than

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40 minutes. But with the four military checkpoints—or five, if you count the soldiers who stopped us to ask for a newspaper—it took several hours. At the stop on the outskirts of Suchitoto we decided to wile away the time by eating our lunch. It was a bizarre setting for a picnic: the explosives tests at the barracks across the road were hard on digestion, but no more so than the barrel-bellied children who appeared to claim our scraps. One boy, who told us he was eight years old, was smaller than my four-year-old niece.

In Suchitoto, FMLN graffiti remained on walls polka-dotted with bullet holes. On the far side of the partially deserted town, as we turned off the main road to climb the dirt one leading to the volcano, soldiers appeared suddenly from behind trees, bushes and burned-out buses. At the next checkpoint, beyond the skeletal remains of Aguacayo, letters carved on a tree trunk told us that we had entered the domain of the fearsome Atlacatl battalion, one of the first units to be specially trained by the U.S. in counterinsurgency and a unit often credited with massacres. Most of the troops, like their guerrilla counterparts, are teenagers, capable of being disarmingly shy or engaging, but also easily frightened and quick of reflex.

Under the volcano: El Barillo's villagers greeted us warmly and then escorted us to a makeshift open-air classroom. Their homes had already been destroyed before Operation Phoenix was unleashed in late 1985. The troops had found them living in *tatus*—dark and clammy dugouts in the mountainsides—where they had managed to escape the bombing and strafing. In January 1986 about 700 men, women and children were captured there and held by the army in an abandoned sugar mill. Finally they were turned over to the Red Cross and placed in a refugee camp near Apopa.

The camp, San José de Calle Real, is run

by two remarkable American nuns with support from the Archdiocese of San Salvador. The nuns and their helpers, including U.S. volunteers, provide medical care and schooling and do what they can to aid psychological healing. But such camps cannot be protected from government kidnappers and informants, and they encourage perceptions of dependency and helplessness.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church—at least its more popularly oriented elements—had come to fear that in offering refuge it was facilitating the government's depopulation campaign and perhaps helping military officers and other speculators seize unoccupied peasant lands. Thus the archdiocese is encouraging peasant families to return to the land in the "conflicted zones."

The government has also encouraged repopulation in recent months, but with an important difference. The government's "United for Reconstruction" plan calls for registration (and, if possible, photographing and finger-printing) of the displaced, and resettlement in new communities planned by the government (strategic hamlets?). The plan requires all aid to Salvadorans from foreign sources, public or private, be distributed through official channels (i.e., the military). The establishment of civil patrols under military tutelage, apparently on the Guatemalan model, would be a prerequisite for the delivery of food, medicine and other essentials.

The church has "declined to participate" in the government program, and it was under the protective wing of the church that 70 refugee families decided in July 1986 to return to their parched land at El Barillo. Little by little, the population of the community had grown to about 500. Despite poverty that might to outsiders be horrifying, El Barillo, to its own residents, is the essence of hope. With pigs and chickens and fields already yielding corn, sesame, beans and melons,

Until recently it appeared that, apart from the FDR, only the poor and powerless had a clear interest in a peaceful settlement.

the community appeared to be well on its way to self-sufficiency.

As we inspected the fields in a narrow valley, a fire etched its way across the adjacent hillside. Its roar almost drowned out our voices, and it showered us with soot and ash. Yet villages went about their farming without seeming to notice. Asked if the fire were the handiwork of the armed forces, they would shrug and say, "I suppose so," without even glancing in its direction.

Accepting the unacceptable: Such is the surrealism of coexistence with war. As this most recent round of insurgency and counterinsurgency wears into its eighth year, the grotesque becomes routine and reasonable people accept the unacceptable. In San Salvador, the level of tension has dropped over the past couple of years, even though the earthquake of October 1986 added 200,000 newly homeless to the hundreds of thousands of desperate squatters already ringing the city, and even though truckloads of soldiers, armed to the teeth,

are a common feature of the traffic pattern. A new labor confederation, the UNTS, born of the currency devaluation and regressive tax package of 1986, remains active. And at the reopened national university, students demonstrate against the thuggery of armed forces recruitment.

By all accounts, casualties are down from the worst violence in 1981. Tutela Legal, the legal arm of the archdiocese, reported only 45 death-squad killings in 1986. Figures for this year range from 17 to up to five killings per month. Bombing runs are claiming fewer casualties, in part because the "sea" has already been drained—the "conflicted zones" have already been largely depopulated. But human rights monitors fear that the apparatus of repression has merely become more sophisticated and effective. While deaths are down, arrests are up, and they appear to be having the intended effect of making people distrust each other.

There is no judicial system in the usual sense—no effective defense for those accused

Salvadoran opposition leader maintains victory for either side 'almost impossible'

By Marc Cooper & Greg Goldin

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

GUILLERMO MANUEL UNGO IS THE CIVILIAN leader of the Salvadoran opposition and perhaps its most eloquent spokesman. Ungo, 56, presides over the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), founded in 1980 as an umbrella grouping of left-of-center political parties, unions and civic groups dedicated to social reform in El Salvador.

For the last seven years the FDR has worked inside of an alliance with the five guerrilla armies that make up the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). While the guerrillas have fought from their positions in the verdant hills of El Salvador, Ungo and the FDR leadership have carried out their battle in a wandering exile.

But testing the political waters in the wake of the recent Central American peace plan, and following their brief return to national soil to carry out political "dialogue" with the Duarte government, Ungo and other FDR leaders recently started making risky trips back to El Salvador.

The following interview was conducted with Ungo in San Jose, Costa Rica, just two days before his return to El Salvador in late November.

How has the Central American peace plan affected the position of your FMLN-FDR coalition?

It is very difficult to give a black-and-white answer. I would say that the [peace] plan has very positive aspects, at least in spirit if not in the text. Its intent regarding detente in the region is positive as it dismantles, at least partially and temporarily, [President] Reagan's strategy in the area.

What about the negative aspects of the plan?

The worst part is that the plan assigns equal legitimacy to all Central American governments. That's good for [Nicaraguan President Daniel] Ortega, but also for [Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon] Duarte. Likewise, all the insurgent forces are treated the same, be they the sons of bitches [or] the legitimate sons. The contras are the sons of bitches—the irregular forces. And we are the legitimate sons, the natural sons, the insurrectionary forces. The plan, however, treats us all the same, both contras and the Salvadoran opposition.

As a result of your recent talks with the Duarte government are you any closer to a negotiated settlement?

No. No. Duarte is playing a game of appearances, meeting with us but making only offers he knows we will reject. In Nicaragua it is easy to find a solution if the contra aid is stopped.



Guillermo Ungo, leader of the Democratic Revolutionary Front

In El Salvador, the [regional peace] agreement tries to isolate the FMLN, but the FMLN can keep on waging a war because it is more self-dependent, self-reliant, than the contras. The war is going to go on as much as the U.S. keeps on giving dollars, ammunition and airplanes to the government.

How do you assess your strategic strength as an opposition in El Salvador? Are you in decline? The State Department says that if the FDR-FMLN was to come into the political system they wouldn't get more than 10 or 15 percent of the vote.

Well, first of all, that is good enough to change the balance of forces. With 10 or 15 percent the balance is broken. That is why they cannot allow us and that is why they play double standards and double talk. And they tie up our hands and invite us to play basketball. Of course, we have more than that. That is the reason why, being so, even Duarte calling about talks between Salvadorans, among Salvadorans, for a Salvadoran solution doesn't want us to be any more in

El Salvador. Because then there is a chance to see mass demonstrations that we do have popular support and that his propaganda falls into pieces.

If you had to tell the American people just what it is that would satisfy your needs or demands in a negotiated process, what is it that you want right now that would lead concretely to a solution of the war in El Salvador?

Well, it has to deal with one word, that's power. But, we are not asking to have the dominant role in power. We just want to have a share. Why? In order to have a democratization of power. Now in a repressive structure of power, nobody will lay down the arms and incorporate into a process into a machinery that has killed 63,000 people. That's more than 0.5 percent of the total population. That would mean more than 3 million people in the U.S. So, what we need is the democratization of the structure of power. And that means a wide-open government, the recomposition of power.

of subversion and no effective prosecution of those accused of death squad activity. One human rights lawyer called the judicial system the "circular file" into which the military dumps its image problem. Some types of torture—e.g., electric shock—have become less common, but, at least until November's amnesty, confessions were still routinely extracted by a combination of physical and psychological torture during the initial 15-day period while prisoners were held incommunicado. Resistance was futile; if prisoners refused to sign their signatures were forged anyway.

It was said that most of the approximately 1,000 men and boys in the political wing of Mariona prison were innocent of FMLN ties when they arrived, but not when they left. Ironically, at the rate of 200 to 300 a month in 1986 and early 1987, the security forces continued to bring in new students for what one European ambassador calls the FMLN boarding school.

In partial compliance with the Arias peace plan, the government released in November some 450 of the political prisoners who were being held without trial. The same amnesty law prohibits prosecution of those accused of military massacres and other atrocities against civilians—a largely moot point at present, since the perpetrators of such crimes are not normally prosecuted. At the insistence of the church, the assassins of Archbishop Romero were excluded from the amnesty.

War without end: Apart from the success of its boarding school, however, the FMLN's immediate prospects are not very bright. Its greatest asset of 1983-84, the ability to provide protection to large segments of the rural population, has been lost. It remains flexible, able to adapt and respond to changing government strategies; but it can hope for no more in the medium term than maintaining the stalemate, and its limited means of keeping the military off-balance bring hardship



Salvadoran peasants are regularly searched by the military at checkpoints.

to civilians as well and probably win it no new friends.

The civilian facade notwithstanding, the real government continues to be the military, answering now to the U.S. rather than to the Salvadoran oligarchy. Military officers stand at the head of a new class, based on control of the state and its resources, that is poised to displace the plantation-based oligarchy.

The oligarchy, represented by D'Aubuisson's National Republican Alliance (ARENA), has not been able to reverse the nationalization of import-export operations, which, along with \$2 million a day from the U.S., provides the bulk of the government's operating budget. It remains able, however, to block any redistributive or service-oriented reform that the

Christian Democrats might propose in hopes of reconstructing their own popular base. And it remains capable of escaping such unpleasanties as serious taxation and the draft.

The illusion that Christian Democrats control the government has become even harder to sustain since the military brazenly sabotaged the last scheduled peace talks. Even the best of the party's rationalizers now fall back on the argument that things would be even worse without them. And they know full well that if they are to survive they must build a political base more reliable than the U.S. Congress.

Some supporters of ARENA, D'Aubuisson's political organization, have begun to charge

that the Christian Democrats don't want to win the war, claiming that they have more to gain from perpetual stalemate. Clearly, the interests of the armed forces are also well served by protracted war. Continued fighting is not necessarily disadvantageous to FMLN's long-term prospects, although the FDR, as the exiled political leadership of the opposition, stands to gain the most from a settlement.

The U.S. military and intelligence officers who design overall strategy have certainly reacted unambiguously to all "peace scares." U.S. political leadership, executive and legislative, Republican and Democratic, remains preoccupied now with Nicaragua and seems content with the structural stability in El Salvador that rests on long-term war. U.S. Ambassador Edwin Corr draws analogies between the Salvadoran conflict and that of post-war World War II Malaysia, where it took 14 years to defeat the guerrillas. (The Malaysian guerrillas, however, were an easily identifiable ethnic minority.)

Until very recently it appeared that, apart from the FDR, only the poor and powerless had a clear interest in a peaceful settlement. And apart from the U.S. Congress, no party to the conflict had any prospect of breaking the stalemate. But with the weakening of the Reagan administration in the wake of the Iran-contra scandal and with new hopes sparked by the Arias accord, some parties to the conflict may reassess their interests.

In late November armed FMLN rebels announced a temporary unilateral cease-fire to coincide with the return of FDR leaders Ungo and Zamora. Thus the FDR/FMLN has called the bluff of Duarte's Christian Democrats and, by extension, the U.S. Congress.

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Doesn't that really mean, in real political terms, a restructuring of the armed forces?

Doesn't it mean a purge of the army?

Certainly. The army is very much dependent upon the Reagan administration because of the arms and the money they get. So the U.S. administration is the one that can help most in carrying out a self-purge. Either it's done voluntarily or it has to be imposed.

What is the state of the war right now? How long can this war continue?

[At this point the battle is] step by step, like a football game, yard by yard. It is a prolongation of the war, but really I can foresee that it is almost impossible to achieve a strict military victory.

On either side?

From the side of the government, impossible. Totally impossible.

And your side?

Almost impossible on just strict military terms. Because almost, I say almost, because, like an earthquake, the army can overnight collapse into pieces, not by shots, but for political reasons.

What might cause that political shift, enough for a collapse of the army?

A deepening of the economic crisis. You know that Duarte told us in our last meeting that he had just enough money to run the war and keep the bureaucracy barely functioning.

You are the top leader of the civilian opposition in El Salvador, and your antagonist is President Duarte. Fifteen years

ago, both of you were running-mates. You were apparently elected in 1972 in a contest stolen from you by fraud. How did you wind up on opposite sides of the barricades?

Historical examples are rarely transferable. I am not [Charles] DeGaulle and Duarte is not [Henri] Pétain. But, that's what happened in France. Pétain was a hero in World War I and then he believed that he could save France [by] being a collaborator with the Nazis in order to save some of it. That's Duarte's role. In order to kill 5,000 instead of 10,000 he is playing his role. In order that they torture less, he is playing his role. That's the difference. And Duarte is an anti-communist. And I would say that I am not a communist, not even pro-communist. But in Latin America with the sort of anti-communism and imperialism we face, you cannot be a democrat being anti-communist and being pro-imperialist. In Latin America democracy is subversive.

But there are within your alliance people who are communists. Specifically, the bulk of the guerrilla leadership is Marxist.

When Duarte and I were running on the same ticket, even his Christian Democrats had an alliance with the Communists. I don't think we have to stimulate and promote communism. But communism has authentic roots, historical roots, in Latin America.

What about the potential for abuses by left-wing militarism?

The answer is in enriching the political ex-

perience and relying on pluralism. And in El Salvador there is a real basis for such pluralism. No one single group is strong enough to dominate. Neither the Christian Democrats nor the Social Democrats, nor the Communists, the different Marxists, nor the church groups. We all need each other.

Some critics say that's not what happened in Nicaragua where the Sandinistas seem to have hegemony.

That's not our fault. Nicaragua is a different society. You know, the kind of pluralism we have in El Salvador is also lacking in the U.S. It is not my fault there are only two political parties. If we were going to teach the U.S.—which we are not—we should teach them to have three more political parties, in order to be more pluralistic.

There is constant speculation that there is always about to be a split between the FDR and the FMLN, especially now that some of you civilian leaders are returning home. How is the relationship between the two of you?

Such a split is what I call the American Dream. But it is only a dream. They also dream to create what they call the democratic center. But in politics the center is not always at the center. Politics is not geometry. In the U.S. the center now is more to the right than 10 years ago. In Latin America the center is more to the left, because of the social conditions of the people.

The Reagan administration is ending its term and a new administration will come

in a year from now. How does this affect your perspective?

Even now this administration is changing. It is starting to change tactics regarding Central America. This means that we have better chances. But we cannot believe in good will and good faith. Because, really, even liberals are imperialist. Because he who has power wants to rely on power. I was talking with an American liberal once and he told me that if the Salvadorans had Soviet bases, he would be along with 90 percent of the American people in favor of military intervention. I said: "Why don't you do that with the Soviet Union. They have nuclear submarines very near you. Why don't you do that with the big guys?"

Is there anybody on Capitol Hill you can go to? Anyone in official Washington who will give you a fair hearing?

They play safe. They ask us a lot but give very little.

It sounds pretty grim.

Not really. I have ultimate faith in pragmatic politics. Remember, at the beginning the Sandinistas were the good guys. Then the propaganda started changing the situation. There are so many changes. On the other hand, remember when Syria was the demon—"the demon," it was called by Reagan. Now Syria is looked at a different way. Why not hope for a change in attitude about us?

Marc Cooper and Greg Goldin are Los Angeles-based journalists who recently returned from Costa Rica.

EDITORIAL



Bold, imaginative, but saying nothing new

Gary Hart still knows how to get attention. Few will deny him that. And he knows how to make an appealing speech. When he re-entered the presidential race last week, he noted that we have recently "seen a monumental stock market crash that exposed very serious faults in this nation's economy," that we may "lose more young Americans unnecessarily in the Persian Gulf," and that we "still have no long-term solution to a staggering budget and trade deficit." To win the election in 1988, Hart said, the Democrats are "going to have to be bold, imaginative and strong, not cautious or political." This election, he said, "is too important to let it pass as a conventional contest in a period of calm."

Hart was entering the race to see that this would not happen. When he quit last spring, he "believed other national leaders would enter this race," and that his "ideas for strategic investment economics, for military reform and for enlightened engagement would be adopted and put forward by others." But after waiting for six months, he observed that "neither of these things has happened."

So he concluded that it was his patriotic duty—and his right—to come back in and save the country.

But—leaving aside the questions about his overweening ego and blind self-absorption—Hart has little to offer that is different from the timid, narrowly opportunist and superficial positions on issues that the other six Democratic candidates have put forward in the dozen or so debates. His three-word summary of ideas—which he says "took months and years to think through and organize" by "some of the most creative minds in the country"—are pedestrian indeed: "Invest, reform and engage."

The first of these is a "policy of strategic investments that rebuild our nation's economic foundation: our schools, our factories, our farms, energy production, public works and our research centers." This is all to the good, but hardly original or unique. Jesse Jackson, Paul Simon and others have offered similar proposals.

The second, "reform" of the military, is designed "to provide an effective conventional force while we drastically reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons." This is a call—now almost universal among moderate proponents of the military-industrial complex—to keep the military budget high in the face of potential cuts in nuclear armaments. It is the worst position of liberal anti-nuclear advocates, one that even Jackson is sliding back into now that he is presenting himself as a candidate who will be responsible to the powers that be.

The third, "enlightened engagement," would "use the force of change in the world, of nationalism, of world markets and of dispersed power as the basis for a new internationalist foreign policy." It's not clear what this means, but it sounds like enlightened imperialism—as in

John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, which gave us today's militarized Central America.

In short, while playing to a real need for boldness and imagination, Hart remains cautious and political in all but his personal behavior. His appeal—such as it is—is in large part a result of popular perception that Democrats must begin looking beyond symptoms to underlying causes if they hope to win in 1988. Paul Simon is correct in saying that one Republican Party is enough. But to revive the two-party system in this country, the Democrats will have to move beyond tinkering. They need to alter their basic principles of domestic and foreign policy. The party will have to abandon the framework of Cold War liberalism and develop programs that put the needs of working Americans above those of our corporate rulers. And they will have to initiate a foreign policy that rejects the idea of the United States as the international policeman for our multinationals.

We, too, are disappointed with the performance of the candidates who have been in the race so far. Unfortunately, Hart's re-entry only makes matters worse. As always, his campaign will center around Hart, the man, rather than around the issues he proposes to discuss.

Nicaraguan self-defense excuse for contra aid

"This doesn't help. The timing wasn't very good at all," said Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) last week when Maj. Roger Miranda Bengoechea, a top-level Nicaraguan defector, was trotted around Congress to tell members that Managua intended to increase its armed forces to 600,000 men.

But it did help. At least it helped Ronald Reagan in his relentless war against Nicaragua. It was one more example of the administration's ability to manipulate events on Capitol Hill—and of the tenuous nature of Democratic Party leaders' commitment to ending the conflict on terms favorable to Nicaragua.

The new issue is whether or not Nicaragua will have the right to defend itself against the threat of future aggression after the contras are removed from the scene. As Daniel Ortega said last week, Nicaragua is "a small nation," and "not defended by any military pact. The United States can do anything it wants against Nicaragua and nobody is going to defend us." The country will "probably have an army of 60,000-80,000, but the whole people will always be a reserve force," Ortega said. This will be true even if a security pact is signed between Nicaragua and the U.S., because past performance gives no grounds for trusting American intentions.

Ortega's view is more than understandable. Given the nature of Reagan administration policies, and the Democratic Party's unwillingness to oppose them in any principled manner, Nicaragua's leaders would be derelict in their duty if they did less.

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"...with liberty and justice for all"

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Graphic feedback

I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I enjoy your art department's work on the cover and back page of *In These Times*. I am a new student of graphic arts and the father of two graphic designers, and it is the highlight of our get-togethers to pull out the old *ITT*s since the last time we met and go over the graphics. I especially liked Peter Hanan's work on the November 16 cover.

Just thought you'd like to know that some of the graphic ideas in the feature articles in some of the weekly papers here in Northern California have been inspired by your work, although you would never recognize them. (Reason: my daughter has worked for many weekly newspapers throughout the area).

Of course, I subscribe to *In These Times* for its political content, but how much more enjoyable it is with your excellent input. Keep up the good work. I am—we are—looking forward to seeing next week's issue.

Erv Knorzner
Oroville, Calif.

Human canaries

IN HER RECENT ARTICLE "SILENT SUMMER" (*ITT*, Nov. 23), Kate Millpointer describes in detail the effects of recent radioactive emissions on several species of birds. She concludes: "Ornithologists generally agree that birds can be regarded as early warning systems for humans because they are extremely sensitive to the environment—like the canary in the coal mine. The miners never knew when poisonous gases were accumulating to dangerous levels. When the canary died, the miners got out. Did birds send a similar message to humanity in the summer of 1986—this time about the dangers of low-level radiation?"

If they did, they are a little late. Many of us have already gotten the message, and have been getting it for the last 40 years. We are the ones who have been diagnosed with "environmental illness," or "multiple chemical sensitivities." We have been reacting with a variety of symptoms, some quite severe, to the more than 70,000 new synthetic chemicals now part of common everyday products. Radiation, radon, asbestos and auto exhaust, all widely publicized, are but a part of our total chemical load, as they are a part of everyone's. We react only because we have gone over our tolerance threshold.

As Rachel Carson expressed it over 25 years ago: "The contamination of our world is not alone a matter of mass spraying; indeed, for most of us this is of no less importance than the innumerable small-scale exposures to which we are subjected day by day, year after year. Like the constant dripping of water that in turn wears away the hardest stone, this birth-to-death contact with dangerous chemicals may in the end prove disastrous.... Lulled by the soft sell and hidden persuader, the average citizen is seldom aware of the deadly materials with which he is surrounding himself; indeed he may not realize he is using them at all."

In short, it is we with environmental illness who are the canaries in the mine—a not-so-distant early warning system. We want our fellow human beings to know that they are indeed in danger from poisonous

gases. It is time for all of us to get out of the chemical miasma we live in.

Lynn Lawson
Human Ecology Action League (HEAL)
Evanston, Ill.

Planning, not genocide

SALIM MUWAKKIL'S STORY ABOUT ABORTION, "Black America's unspoken issue" (*ITT*, Nov. 9), was particularly interesting. The arguments advanced by Nathan and Julia Hares and others—in summary, that abortion is a white tool for black genocide—are frightening because they could hurt black children by increasing the proportion who are born unwanted. They would also saddle more young black women with child rearing responsibilities that make it impossible for them to finish their education and become self-sufficient.

The arguments are not only dangerous, but factually wrong. Abortion has not caused genocide: the black population is steadily growing, from 9.9 percent of the population in 1950 to 12.1 percent in 1984, and it is projected to reach 14.3 percent in 2020. In 1985 pregnant black teenagers were only 76 percent as likely to have an abortion as whites. But surprisingly, there is a little-known grain of truth to what they say: the birthrate among black teenagers has actually been decreasing, from 148 per 1,000 in 1970 to 96 per 1,000 in 1984. Black teenage pregnancy may have become more visible partly because the proportion of mothers who remain unmarried—and lack financial support—has increased from 66 percent in 1970 to 91 percent in 1984. And the birthrate among teenage blacks remains more than twice the rate among whites, as does the infant mortality rate.

The purpose of family planning is not to commit genocide against black people, but to enable black and white women to wait to have a child until they are ready to nurture a child, without destroying their own chance to escape poverty.

Kim Wentz, M.D.
Epidemiologist, Children's Hospital
Seattle, Wash.

Omission

DOUG TURETSKY'S GOOD ROUNDUP OF NEW housing bills (*ITT*, Nov. 9) incorrectly observes that "none of the current bills aims directly at one of the most critical issues facing the nation's low-income housing stock—expiring federal subsidies and use restrictions on privately owned projects built with federal funding."

Title III of Rep. Ron Dellums' "National Housing Act" (HR 4727), based on the Insti-

tute for Policy Studies' "Progressive Housing Program for America," bears the heading "The Subsidized Housing Preservation Act." It provides for permanent mortgage write-downs plus operating subsidies for non-profit projects with defaulted mortgages, and similar benefits for privately owned projects if they are converted to social (non-speculative, non-profit) ownership. Other sections of the title provide for upgrading physically deteriorated projects, grants for conversion to social ownership, enhanced security of tenure and resident control, management by community-based entities and prohibitions against loss of such subsidized housing through demolition or conversion to private, profit-oriented ownership.

The full IPS program is available through me, at IPS, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Chester W. Hartman
Institute for Policy Studies
Washington, D.C.

ACLU

I HAVE ONLY ONE SLIGHT DISAGREEMENT WITH JOHN Judis' sensible analysis of the ACLU (*ITT*, Nov. 9) It does require a perverse stretch of the imagination to construe airport metal scans as generally "unreasonable" searches. Nonetheless Judis does the ACLU an injustice by lumping this error with their stand on the taxation of religious organizations. This form of tax exemption is a disgraceful parody of the principle that "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Given an intrinsically regressive tax system, all tax exemptions are de facto political endorsements of whatever "persons" or entities happen to have amassed the greatest capital. Arguing that generalized religious exemptions are an effective way to reduce the tyranny of the majority is tantamount to arguing that generalized oil exemptions or generalized capital gains tax reductions are an effective way of ensuring freedom of entry into the energy business.

Conversely, arguing that taxation of organized religion is a "prohibition of its free exercise" opens the door to the absurd conclusion that every form of taxation is a violation of the Bill of Rights—for instance, that taxing CBS constitutes an infringement on free speech.

What this example makes plain is that, whatever the theoretical validity of the conventional distinction between "political" and "constitutional" questions, its practice is riddled with elementary logical errors. Clearly there is little hope of resolving such errors legislatively so long as candidates for legislative (and executive) office are encouraged to engage in black propaganda exercises.

By conflating this problem with the question of public safety Judis—not the ACLU—encourages the stupid attitude that the judicial branch should offer no solace for the rationalist minority in the face of a legislative branch deeply tainted via legalized bribery and media conglomeration.

Jonathan McVity
Charlottesville, Va.

Debasement

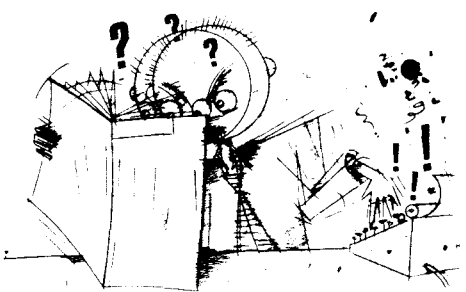
THE PIECE ON THE ACLU BY JOHN JUDIS (*ITT*, NOV. 9) is a pretty good analysis. The lessons he draws are, I believe, quite bad.

It is true, as he says, that the ACLU (and liberals in general) have made a fetish of the Constitution and hopelessly befogged the distinction between juridical and political questions. They rush forth with the holy script held high to fight imperialism, racism, monopoly, male chauvinism and environmental pigs. They debase themselves before the court.

Thus our good friends (and myself) in the ACLU were not wrong to fight the Vietnam War or seek to impeach Richard Nixon. They were right. The error was not political action or commitment, but rather confusing all this with the pale and silent Oracle of 1789. For too long, left-leaning activists have sought comfort in the black-robed seers. Indeed, they had great victories with the judges, while they lost the people. Co-opted by legal fictions, their political vigor was castrated. What they won in the courts (abortion, capital punishment, civil rights) was being squandered at the ballot box.

As James Watt drove the prissy Sierra Club into political action, William Rehnquist may save us (and the ACLU) from the sterile worship of legal mysteries.

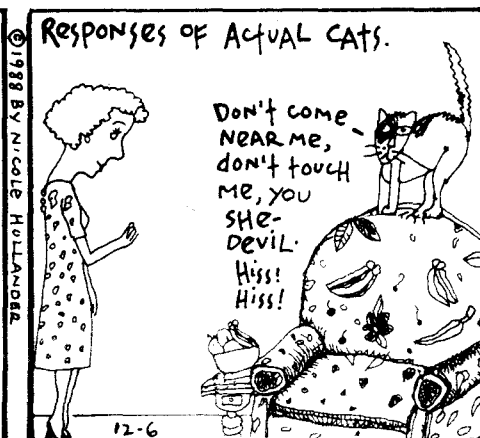
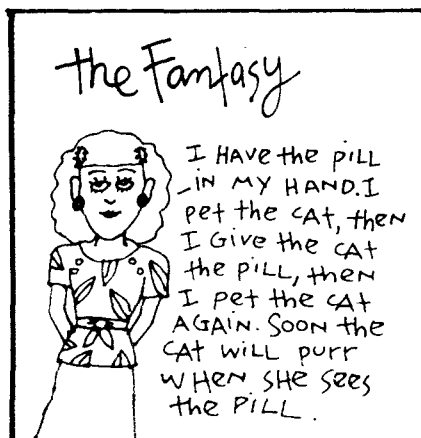
Robert J. Koblitz
Orleans, Mass.



Correction

A headline for the December 7 article about Canada's elections, "A victory for free trade; a loss for social programs," misrepresented Doug Smith's story. In fact, Smith wrote that deficit reduction "could be accomplished without a cut in social programs."

SYLVIA



Nuclear engineer exposes Teller lie

By Robert M. Nelson

I HAVE NEVER MET ROY WOODRUFF, NOR, chances are, will I. Woodruff has dedicated his life to engineering and managing a variety of nuclear weapons programs at the Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where he rose to the rank of associate administrator for defense systems. There he managed the X-ray laser program that is supposed to play an important role in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), President Reagan's "Star Wars" system.

My work has been devoted to astronomical research, particularly the peaceful activity of exploring the solar system as part of the planetary research program. In my free time I also serve as co-chair of the Southern California Federation of Scientists, an organization that encourages scientists to speak out on the dangers of the nuclear arms race. But an odd set of circumstances recently brought me and Woodruff together in what may prove more than just a footnote to history.

Woodruff's complaint: Last month I received a series of documents from an unknown source. These documents included a photocopy of a letter written by Woodruff to David Gardner, president of the University of California—which manages the Livermore weapons laboratory for the Department of Energy. The letter was a griev-

ance by Woodruff written against Livermore Director Roger Batzel.

The allegations were astounding. According to Woodruff's letter, Edward Teller, the father of the H-bomb, and Lowell Wood, another top Livermore advocate of X-ray laser development, conveyed incorrect statements to the nation's highest policy-makers and were discovered by Woodruff, who reported this to the director, Batzel. Batzel then forced Woodruff out of his job. These charges required verification. Inquiries—by myself and my colleagues in the Southern California Federation of Scientists—confirmed that Woodruff had indeed made such a grievance against Batzel. It also became clear that it was not possible for Woodruff to have leaked the documents. I suspect that the source was probably an honest version of Fawn Hall, someone who recognized the serious nature of the material and would not consider being part of a cover-up.

After much discussion we became convinced that these charges should be brought to the attention of Congress and the public. If a responsible independent investigation were to confirm the charges, there might be a profound impact on the next round of Star Wars funding in Congress.

But it was made clear through several intermediaries that, despite his dispute with



Batzel and Teller, Woodruff did not want this made public. He is known as a scrupulously honest engineer and manager who believes in applying his talents to research-and-development activities related to the nuclear weapons program. Apparently he wanted to continue his work in the weapons program after this matter was resolved. Although we were sympathetic to Woodruff's situation, the issue of informing the public took precedence. If Teller had misled President Reagan about Star Wars, the public should know while it is still possible to change course. After much discussion and disagreement, my colleagues and I ultimately went public with the material despite Woodruff's objection.

Reactions: We briefed several members of the press and released the information at a press conference in Los Angeles in late October. The *Los Angeles Times* published the story on Page 1 under the headline "Tel-

Livermore Laboratory manager Roy Woodruff caught H-bomb father Edward Teller giving false reports on Star Wars feasibility to top policy-makers. In return, he was fired.

ler gave flawed data on X-ray laser, scientist says." The story ran that day in many newspapers in California, and on the next day a story appeared in the *New York Times*.

Two days later Woodruff was in a closed-door session with Rep. George Brown (D-CA), chair of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, and with Rep. Charles Bennett (D-FL), a member of the Armed Services Committee. Brown asked the General Accounting Office to conduct an investigation. And Armed Services Committee member Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) asked

the chair of the armed services subcommittee on investigations, Rep. Bill Nichols (D-AL) to look into the matter.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported a few days later that the University of California had ruled that Woodruff should be reinstated to a position of comparable status as a result of the grievance. Although it is not clear if the University found Woodruff's allegations to be true, it is inconceivable that he would have been reinstated if his charges were false. One simply does not level false charges at a laboratory director such as Batzel and a scientist such as Teller and get away with it.

The matter has now been placed on the public agenda, although the charges have yet to be investigated. A full discussion of this matter might well occur behind closed doors on Capitol Hill. While such an outcome might be a partial remedy to the particular problem, the only satisfactory solution is to have the public made aware of the findings as soon as possible.

Reagan cornerstone: After the Reykjavik summit, which foundered on the Star Wars issue, Reagan returned to the U.S. and spoke to the nation. "I asked our military a few years ago to study and see if there was a practical way to destroy nuclear missiles after their launch but before they can reach their targets rather than just destroy people," he said. "That is the goal for what we call SDI, and our scientists researching such a system are convinced it is practical and that several years down the road we can have such a system ready to deploy."

Could it be that Teller had bent the president's ear before he went to the summit that failed? If so, when will the public know? Will it be now or several decades hence when it will be a mere footnote to history—one that will do little to change public policy?

Consider that 25 years ago legend has it that a young, strong President John F. Kennedy stood eyeball-to-eyeball with a boisterous Nikita Khrushchev over the issue of Soviet missiles in Cuba. And that Khrushchev backed down. Thus, a generation of Americans learned that the way to deal with the Soviet Union was to be tough, even to the point of risking a nuclear war.

But recently scholars researching the JFK archives firmly established that what happened in 1962 was a negotiated settlement in which Soviet missiles in Cuba were withdrawn in exchange for the withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey and Italy. While it is good that the historical record has been set straight, the political damage cannot be repaired. Twenty-five years of U.S. attitudes toward Soviet relations have been influenced by the "tough-guy" mythology.

Today another president talks tough and summit conferences that may shape the future of civilization founder on the issue of Star Wars technology. Will the issue of Teller's alleged bad advice to the policy-makers be resolved as a footnote to history in 1997 or 2007, or will the resolution of this issue be in the present context where it will be relevant to determining the future? Only Roy Woodruff, Rep. George Brown and a few selected members of the House Armed Services Committee can decide that.

Robert M. Nelson is co-chair of the Southern California Federation of Scientists. He is also a co-host of a weekly radio talk show about science on KPFK-FM, Los Angeles.

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James Weinstein
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U.S. Editing Out of This World

One of the more remarkable excisions of history achieved on a weekly basis by the U.S. mainstream press are opinions of the rest of the world about the U.S., as expressed at the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the days when the U.S. could regularly command majorities in the General Assembly, votes favorable to U.S. concerns were proudly recorded in the press here. But now, a quarter of a century on, when support for the U.S. is not automatically forthcoming, a different situation prevails.

A few weeks ago a General Assembly vote condemning the Soviet Union for its activities in Afghanistan received wide coverage in the press. A vote two days later essentially urging the U.S. and other countries to abide by decisions of the World Court concerning Nicaragua passed almost unanimously and was mostly ignored. On November 30 the U.N. General Assembly stated its grave concern at the militarization of outer space and called on both the U.S. and Soviet Union to conduct bilateral negotiations to prevent this. The resolution passed by 154 to 1, with no abstentions. The U.S. cast the sole dissenting vote. I saw no report of this in any U.S. publication available to me, even though the Gorbachov visit was imminent and therefore the views of the world on SDI presumably of some interest.

Similarly unreported was the fact that the U.S. cast the sole dissenting vote against a resolution condemning the development of any new weapons of mass destruction (18 abstentions), and was joined only by France in voting against a call for a comprehensive test ban (eight abstentions). The Assembly cast more than 25 votes on arms issues. In 14 cases, the U.S. opposed the resolutions while the U.N. endorsed them.

Red Noonday

The symbolic transfer of power from Ronald Reagan to Mikhail Gorbachov has been very evident to me in journeys around the country over the last month.

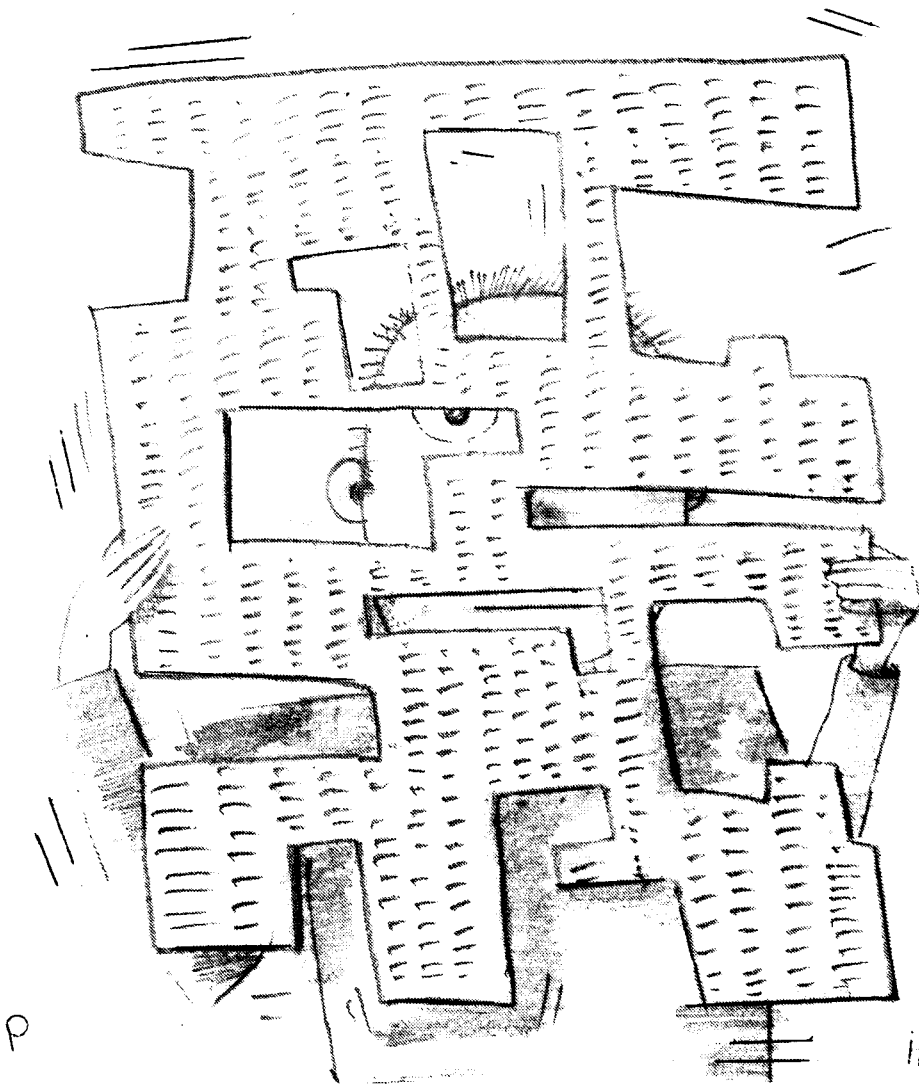
I'm not speaking here merely of the famous "Peoples' Committees" that have sprung up spontaneously in such traditional centers of dissent as Madison, Wis., Boulder, the Bay Area, the Northwest, Burlington, Vt., and so on. But less predictable areas have also seen demonstrations in favor of Gorbachov-style openness and economic renewal.

The committees are already organizing state-by-state campaigns to put Gorbachov or some appropriate proxy on the ballot during the upcoming primary season and demanding that their position gets equal time in innumerable TV debates scheduled over the coming months. Some strategists are arguing that such mechanistic adherence to "electoralism" is unnecessary and that stage known in Leninist theory as dual power is already a realistic prospect. In this analysis Reagan has a year remaining of ceremonial office during which time the effective control of the state would be shifted to the Kremlin, where the major decisions would be taken.

This perspective has been denounced—rightly, in my judgment—as *etatism*, a crude reading of Lenin's April theses and his pre-emptory injunctions to the Petrograd Military Committee of October 1917. The cautions of Zioniev and Kamenev, erroneous in that instance, are here appropriate. It is already evident that the enemies of openness and eco-

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



omic renewal, appalled by the success of Gorbachov's visit, are seeking to regroup. Outgoing Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger openly affirmed his view of the Soviet Union as an evil empire at exactly the moment that President Reagan was saying that he no longer believed this to be the case. Secretary of State Shultz has called for an increase in conventional arms to offset the INF nuclear accord and the Senate, controlled by Democrats, passed \$16 billion in aid to the Nicaraguan contras on December 12.

Etatist fantasies are clearly out of place. The next stage is one or more Peoples' Committees fostering a debate on economic renewal, leading to a national convention in the midsummer of 1988 and designed to contrast with the sterile procedures of the national conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties. Bulking large on this agenda will be the *glasnost* USA campaign, calling for popular access to the major means of communication.

The prospect then is for nurturing of a broad progressive movement for change and renewal in the United States, impelled by the fundamental principle of democracy from below, and liberated from the constrictions of the present one-party system inhabited by the Democrats and Republicans.

The Future of the Jackson campaign

The perspectives discussed above naturally provoke the question: What about Jesse Jackson? In my travels I encountered considerable debate about the proper attitude toward the man's campaign for the Democratic nomination. A number of recent developments have fortified uncertainty. The

somewhat unsparing description by Mary Summers, his former speechwriter, in *The Nation* (November 28), has been widely discussed, as has the murky affair of the rejected endorsement.

On December 4, the *New York Times* ran a story by Michael Orestes reporting that the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) were about to endorse Jackson as their preferred candidate for the Democratic nomination, but that this endorsement had been turned aside by Gerald Austin, one of Jackson's campaign managers, who made a sybilline distinction between his accepting of "support" or "endorsement," saying that in the case of DSA the former was preferable. Among socialist or radical groups who regard involvement in two-party politics as a waste of time, this development aroused a certain amount of malicious glee at a comical failure of the DSA to establish any political rapport with the man deemed to be one of the most progressive forces within the Democratic Party.

This reaction, while understandable, is not particularly creative. In 1984, younger members of DSA had been incensed by the refusal of the group's leadership to address itself to the issue of Jackson's candidacy. Irving Howe let it be known that if DSA said anything good about the reverend he would bolt, an act that should properly have raised the same philosophical reverberations as the old conundrum about the noise of a twig falling in the forest. This time around, after determined politicking by many of DSA's younger cadres, DSA came through with the endorsement properly rejected by Austin, a mainstream political operator from Ohio whose chief distinction in the Jackson campaign, alluded to on all possi-

ble occasions, is that he is Jewish. The malicious glee of the faction of DSA sympathetic to Howe's posture was swiftly in evidence; and in maneuvers surrounding the retirement of DSA Chair Michael Harrington, who is very seriously ill, this same faction had the better of it over their more radical opponents.

A day later Jackson himself—warned by advisers that the Austin rejection was enormously damaging both to the image and blurred reality of a Rainbow movement and to the enthusiasm of activists prepared to work long and hard for Jackson—announced that the DSA endorsement was welcome, causing Michael Harrington to lament the media-induced confusion. This may have showed that the candidate was sensitive to pressure from the left—a *sine qua non* in any relationship of a progressive movement to a Democratic candidate—but did not quell suspicions that Jackson has bolted himself into the diving bell of "responsible candidacy" and now often sounds like someone filibustering on behalf of the Council of Foreign Relations.

Consider what he said at the "presidential debate" on December 1, where massed ranks of candidates curvetted at the behest of Tom Brokaw. Brokaw had asked, "If there is a Soviet satellite state in Central America—another Cuba—would that bother you?" This question, which has the same scholarly detachment as Sen. Al d'Amato's recent poll to his constituents, "Should the U.S. be defending freedom in the Persian Gulf?," initially elicited from Jackson the response that "If we support self-determination and economic development...we can win Nicaragua." Excepting the unattractive conceptual connotation of "win," this is all right. But then he went on:

"Yes, we should negotiate bilaterally with Ortega. No foreign military advisers. No Soviet base. And if they, in their self-determination, choose to relate to the Soviets in that way, they must know the alternative. If they are with us, there are tremendous benefits. If they are not with us, there are tremendous consequences. If we are clear...the response will be clear."

In other words, if you are not with us, you are against us—and in case you're wondering what that means, read up on the history of Guatemala.

Insofar as Jackson articulates issues—Palestinians' rights, for example—normally expelled from mainstream political discourse, he nourishes a progressive movement. But there has to be some sort of accountability—dare we call it dialectical—between such a movement and its representative, also continuity of a movement beyond the personal tactical program of one mainstream candidate; otherwise dreams expire with a few balloons below the roof of the convention hall in Atlanta.

If considerations of personal security would permit, Jackson could certainly energize his campaign and distinguish himself more sharply from his competitors if he dares to go soon to Haiti, there to proclaim that the abuses to democracy—abuses underwritten by the U.S.—are as great as they were in the times that provoked the march on Selma; and to call publicly on the U.S. to give its full backing to the original electoral council that the U.S.' creatures, Namphy and Regala, have attempted to depose. Thus could a candidate placed on the defensive by hypothetical questions about Soviet bases regain the political and moral initiative.

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IN THE ARTS



Nixon in China: Boy meets China, boy gets China, history gets trampled, opera gets trivial.

A Tricky Dicky dreamscape: doing Chinese with the Nixon mob

Nixon in China

Directed by Peter Sellars
Composed by John Adams
Libretto by Alice Goodman

By Joel Schechter

A WEEK BEFORE MIKHAIL GORBACHOV met Ronald Reagan in Washington, Nixon met Mao in Brooklyn. The new opera, *Nixon in China*, was performed in December at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Its 1987 premiere in New York and Houston provided odd musical accompaniment to reports of the Reagan-Gorbachov summit. Nixon's friendly visit to Mao in 1972, after he said for years that China had been lost to the Communists, was as full of contradictions as Reagan's agreement to sign an arms treaty with the leader of a bloc he continues to call the "evil empire."

Such Cold War ironies have been minimized by librettist Alice Goodman in her collaboration with composer John Adams and director Peter Sellars. The three agreed in advance not to stage a satire of Nixon. Instead the president is presented as an almost-innocent American abroad. The opera's portrait of Henry Kissinger is less flattering, but, in general, *Nixon in China* is not averse to the policies of its title character.

Growing old and soft: It could be called a revisionist history, except that "history" is the wrong word to describe the dreamlike sequences set in the Peking Opera and the bedrooms of the Nixons and Chairman Mao. The post-minimalist music by Adams—with its simple scale progressions repeated and layered with flourishes—increases the daydream effect when Nixon recalls his hamburger stand ("Nick's Snack Shack") in the Pacific and Mao informs Nixon, "I'm growing old and soft, and won't demand your overthrow."

Like recent conservative attacks on Reagan for his treaty with Moscow, *Nixon in China* suggests that Nixon, the president who dreamed about hamburgers in China, was blissfully ignorant of all but the most superficial, ceremonial matters of state. Yet the opera comes closer to honoring Nixon than criticizing his naivete. Chairman Mao could be speaking for the librettist and director when he assures Nixon, "You've got my vote. I like right-wingers."

Chairman Mao could be speaking for the librettist and director when he assures Nixon, "You've got my vote. I like right-wingers."

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The political and artistic biases of the opera surface most fully in Act 2, when Pat and Dick visit the Peking Opera. Attending a ballet, "The Red Detachment of Women" (choreographed in Brooklyn by Mark Morris), the Nixons notice that a dancer in the villain's role looks like Henry

OPERA

Kissinger. In fact, the same performer appears as the Secretary of State in other scenes, where he sings almost nothing.

The work's creators attack Kissinger indirectly, trivializing his statesmanship by double-casting him as a cruel Chinese landlord's factotum in the ballet. As the factotum, he torments a peasant woman bound in chains, and gloats: "This is the fate/ Of all who set/ Small against great." The Nixons are so disturbed by his cruelty that they interrupt it.

Historical amnesia: The presidential couple become so sympathetic to an oppressed Chinese woman in this fantasy that they join the ballet; they offer weaponry and medical aid to the peasants. The highly implausible, comic scene shows Pat and Dick forgetting they once opposed Chinese Communism, forgetting they are witnessing fiction, and briefly assisting the Red Women's Militia. Soon Madam Mao, their host, is on the scene, too, choreographing the revolution while Nixon distributes bags of grain to hungry peasants.

The ballet sequence reveals more about the opera's creators than it does about the Nixons. In choosing to portray the president and his wife as gullible and charitable tourists—pro-revolutionary tourists, at that—*Nixon in China* becomes little more than an amusing, Disneylike tour of history.

Other scenes, also suitable for inclusion in Fantasyland or Edward Said's next edition of *Orientalism*, portray Pat Nixon petting a pig on a communal farm while the chorus sings "Pig, pig, pig"; Chairman Mao saying that Nixon's book, *Six Crises*, "isn't bad," and "these books of mine aren't anything"; and a boyish, patriotic Richard Nixon declaring after a banquet, "Never have I so enjoyed a dinner...outside America." These lines verge on comedy; but their staccato recitation to Adams' score makes them sound serious.

The opera's wittiest components are its scene and costume design, which mimic the photographs of 1972 newsweeklies. Officials posing at the airport and at banquet tables,

surrounded by cameras and microphones, turn Nixon's China into one long, colorful photo opportunity—as it was, from the perspective of the press. The Nixons and Kissinger descend to Peking from a nearly lifesize cardboard cutout of a jet plane that lands on stage; the cartoonish set suggests satire, though it rarely arrives. Later Chairman Mao, in a lime green Mao jacket, steps out of an enormous billboard featuring his own famous visage, to sing, "I am no one, I am unknown," another improbable moment. The Mao billboard, and the bright reds and greens of the costumes, evoke a world somewhere between Andy Warhol's pop art silkscreens of Mao and the agit-prop poster art of post-revolutionary China and Cuba.

The libretto's best lyrics recall that once popular cultural icon, Mao's little red book. He and others sing lines resembling his quotations, or parodies of them, such as Nixon's invitation to Chou En-lai: "Let us...start a long march on new highways/ In different lanes, but parallel/ And heading for a single goal." (Undoubtedly, his march would require federal funding to widen the highways.) The poetry maps an intricate world of dreams and diplomacy, but its compressed lines often leap past serious issues instead of exploring them. "I opposed China, I was wrong," is virtually all we hear from Nixon about his major reversal in foreign policy.

In the opening song, Chinese soldiers and peasants sing, "The people are the hero now." The tune changes considerably once Nixon arrives. If he is not the opera's hero, he is shown to be no worse than a highly enthusiastic, photogenic tourist. If he and Kissinger flew to China in search of the new markets and cheap labor that the U.S. subsequently found there, it is not acknowledged. (Mao warns, "Founders come first, then the profiteers," and he sings about a Chinese "plunge into the New York Stock Exchange," but his speculations are confined to a few lines of verse.) The lyrics tend to be as insulated from political conflicts and realities—as introspective and private—as Nixon's closing dream about a hamburger stand.

Nixon in China will be performed in 1988 in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and the Netherlands. Richard Nixon has so far declined all invitations to see it, but he needn't have worried. With no apparent irony, the libretto has Nixon compare his first steps in China to those of an Apollo astronaut walking on the moon. That this operatic character regards the most populous nation on Earth as an exotic, alien planet would not be so reprehensible, if the opera's creators did not seem to share the attitude, and celebrate it.

Joel Schechter teaches at the Yale School of Drama.

Mahabharata
Directed by Peter Brook

By Rob Silberman

WHEN PETER BROOK WAS seven years old, he staged a production of *Hamlet* on Christmas Day, using a tiny theater his father had built for him. The production lasted four hours. When it was over, the young *wunderkind* immediately requested that he be permitted to perform the entire play again—so he could try out a few changes. A notebook from the time was inscribed “*Hamlet* by P. Brook and W. Shakespeare.”

The boy prodigy wasted little time becoming a prodigious man of the theater. In 1946, scarcely more than 20 years old, he became the youngest person in history to direct a production of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Now, roughly 50 productions later—everything from the classics to *Irma la Douce* on Broadway to films such as *The Lord of the Flies*—Brook retains his youthful energy and ambition, as well as his willingness to experiment, as is evident in his version of the *Mahabharata*. More than 10 years in the making, this production offers the fullest demonstration to date of Brook's mature style, his unique blend of primitivism and refinement. Yet the Brook *Mahabharata*, magnificent as it is, is more of a summary of past explorations than a movement in a new direction.

The pivotal period in Brook's career was the '60s and early '70s, beginning with a 1962 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *King Lear*, Paul Scofield in the title role, that presented an absurdist, Beckett-like interpretation of the play. In 1964 Brook staged Peter Weiss' play *Marat-Sade*, proving his ability to use avant-garde ideas, primarily from Antonin Artaud's so-called Theater of Cruelty, as the basis for crowd-pleasing popular entertainment.

Reanimating the classics: In 1968 Brook published *The Empty Space*, a manifesto describing what he called The Deadly Theater, The Holy Theater, The Rough Theater, and The Immediate Theater. Finally, Brook's 1971 production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, a playful staging using rock music and elements from the circus (juggling, stilts, trapezes) showed once again his ability to bring the classics back to life.

“A group of actors,” Brook has said, “must also be a community...a social experiment.” In November 1970, he entered a new phase of his career when he established the International Center of Theater Research in Paris. The company is multi-national, and when not in Paris is likely to be performing in venues far removed from the traditional theater: a small village market in Africa, perhaps, or the grandiose ruins of Persepolis—before

the fall of the Shah—where the production featured a text using a made-up language created by the poet Ted Hughes.

The work is collaborative and often improvisational, and reflects a wide variety of influences, from Brecht to the puppet theater, from Stanislavski to the Japanese Noh drama. Among the productions have been Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, *The Conference of the Birds* (from a Sufi

THEATER

legend), *The Bone* (inspired by an African folk tale) and, the last production to reach these shores, a version of the opera *Carmen*.

The *Mahabharata*, therefore, stands at the end of almost 20 years of experimentation. Nine hours long, not counting intermissions, the play was adapted from an Indian epic poem that is roughly 15 times as long

as the Bible; in Western terms, the *Mahabharata* might be thought of as a combination of *Genesis*, *The Illiad*, Shakespeare, Ovid and the Grail legends. Jean-Claude Carrière, best known for his collaboration with Buñuel on such films as *Belle de Jour* and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, wrote the script, which Brook then adapted and translated into English.

All things to all people: The title means “the story of the great Bharata clan”; by extension, “The Great History of Mankind.” The *Mahabharata* contains all kinds of material, including a mythological genealogy of mankind and historical episodes as well as didactic and philosophical passages, the most famous being the *Bhagavad Gita* (“Victory and defeat, pleasure and pain are all the same. Forget desire; seek detachment”).

The central story, and the main focus of Brook's production, re-

counts the struggle between two sets of feuding cousins: the five Pandava brothers (all happily married to the same woman!) and the hundred Kaurava brothers (represented in the play by a few brothers and their major allies). The climax is a bloody

Brook's unique blend of primitivism and refinement comes to Brooklyn.

battle, with the “good guy” Pandavas defeating the “bad guy” Kauravas. In the end, all the principal characters die; the play concludes with an especially lovely vision of their peaceful co-existence in paradise.

In staging the *Mahabharata* in the U.S., Brook followed his Paris model by renovating an abandoned theater in a decidedly non-glamorous sec-

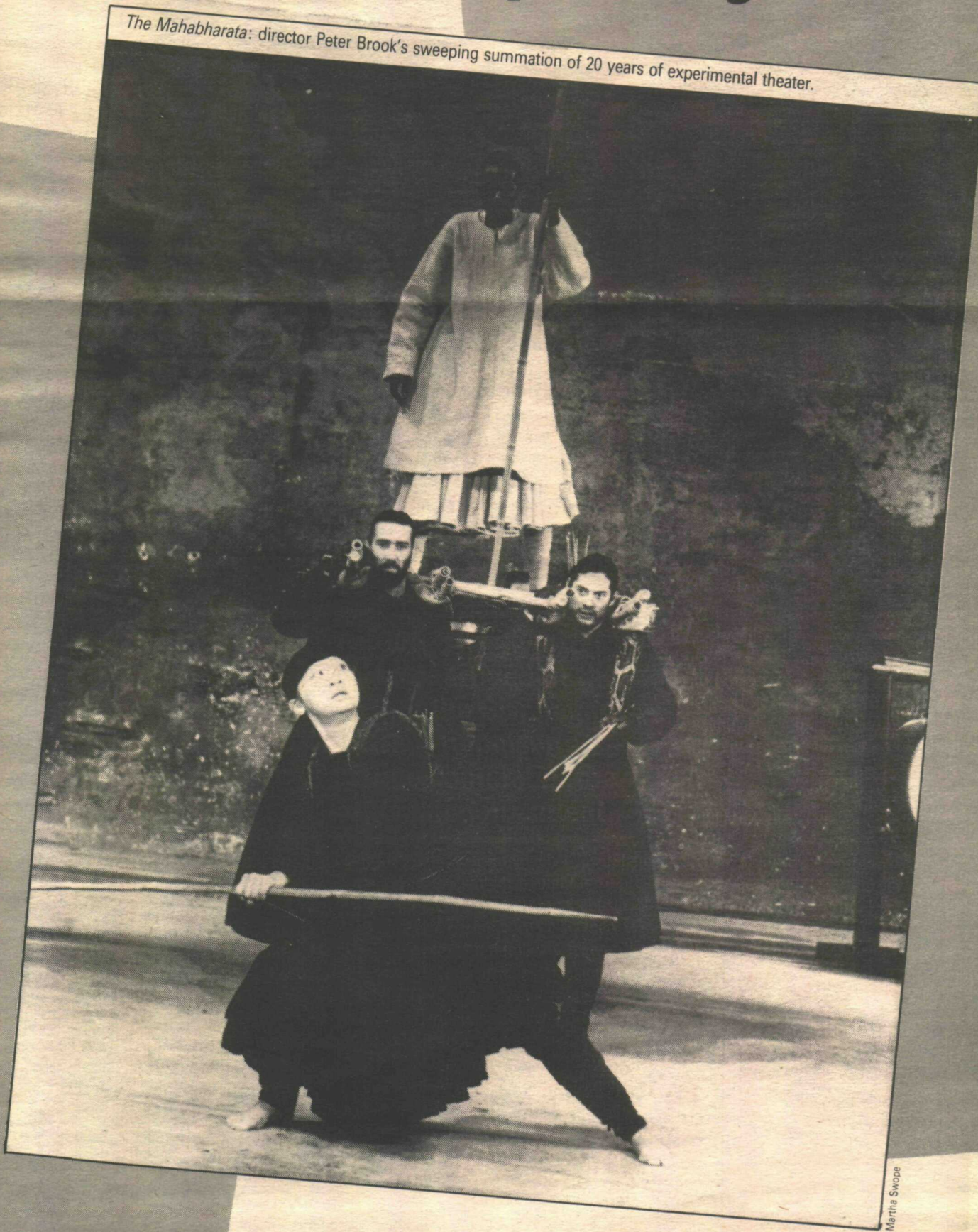
tion of town. The Majestic, in a borderline section of Brooklyn, was preserved in a state of artful, even elegant, decrepitude; the chipped plaster of the proscenium and the peeling paint of the boxes, for example, were left virtually untouched. The rawness goes beyond bare-brick yuppie chic, however, providing a visible reminder of the passage of time, one of the *Mahabharata*'s great themes.

All the usual stage machinery—the backdrops and hoists and the like—was cleared away, opening up a view to the back wall of the theater. The playing area itself, thrust out into the area formerly occupied by the orchestra pit, was an expanse of sand, with a small pool of water and, in the rear, a shallow moat running all the way across. The sand and brick served as a subdued backdrop that made the brightly colored costumes, the sometimes elaborate

Continued on following page

The Mahabharata's epic changes

The Mahabharata: director Peter Brook's sweeping summation of 20 years of experimental theater.



Martha Swope

Continued from preceding page
decor, and the eye-grabbing use of fire all the more vivid. The musicians—a typical Brook mix, from Turkey, Iran, Japan and Denmark—sat on one side, clearly visible, playing a variety of exotic instruments such as nadaswarams and didjeridus.

The Brook-Carrière *Mahabharata* is a late example of Orientalism, the Western fascination with the exotic East. It is also a testimony to Brook's faith in universals, in theater as a unifying process bringing together actors and audience in spite of language and cultural differences. For Brook, there is no problem with Westerners tackling an Oriental epic, so long as they are aware of the gap that separates their efforts from indigenous expression.

In *The Shifting Point* (Harper and Row) a new collection of writings, speeches and interviews from the past 40 years, Brook argues with typical provocation that "the trouble is not that we want entertainment, but that we don't." If the audience really demanded entertainment, he adds, the world's theaters would either be completely emptied, once and for all, or would start delivering much more serious work.

Though he's always been described as an innovator and theorist, that is misleading: Brook is really much more of a practical man of the theater, an entertainer in the best sense of the word, who synthesizes

and popularizes the ideas of more single-minded colleagues such as Jerzy Grotowski of the Polish Laboratory Theater. Of course, compared to, say, Mike Nichols, Brook appears far more serious about ideas. But that is partly because he works in the world of the contemporary avant-garde rather than within the conventions of Hollywood and Broadway.

Long haul in Brooklyn: At Brooklyn, the *Mahabharata* could be seen either all on one day, on three consecutive evenings, or one part per week for three consecutive weeks. I saw the one-day version, yet the performance never became an endurance contest. After all, Brook is an experienced director with a refined sense of pacing, and the conflict at the center of the action has a built-in fascination, as the audience awaits the inevitable showdown. Like *Nicholas Nickleby*, the Brook *Mahabharata* makes good use of story theater techniques, with a mixture of narration and dramatic action (one of the main characters represents the author of the poem).

The three sections are neatly devised to play independently. The first introduces the characters and concludes with the crooked game of dice that causes the Pandavas to lose their kingdom to the Kauravas. The second part describes the Pandavas' years of exile in the forest, the comical situation that arises when they pass a year in disguise at the court of a Kaurava ally, and the gathering

of weapons for the long-awaited confrontation. The battle and its aftermath occupy the concluding section.

Brook's most noble aim, a truly multinational company, causes the play's most basic problem: mangled English. The Brook-Carrière text uses a plain style, but one with unusual pungency. Thus the leader of the Kauravas, faced with a request for a token gift of land, insists that he will not make any concessions: "I will not give the point of a needle of earth." And before the battle, one warrior proclaims that "We will have blood, and skulls in which to drink the blood."

Yet, when spoken by actors whose native language is not English—three of the five Pandava brothers were played by actors performing in English for the first time—the dialogue was frequently of the "Yonder lies the castle of my father" variety. The awkwardness and accents had a certain charm, but the over-deliberation was sad to observe, as in the case of the great Ryszard Cieslak, a polish actor famous for his performances with Grotowski's company. Fortunately, British actors played the key roles of the poet and—a cleverly conceived double part—the scribe/Krishna.

Spectacular success: The *Mahabharata* succeeds, above all, as theater—that is, in Brook's terms, as a spectacle bringing together performers and audience in temporary communion. In an age of movies with special effects and casts of

thousands, the device of having one character describe the off-stage action to another seems wooden at best. But Brook repeatedly demonstrated his mastery at creating moments of exquisite lyricism, appalling violence and uproarious humor. Brook's theatricality can turn any episode into an epiphany. But there is a hollowness in the production: it has richness, but not density.

Perhaps it's simply a problem of being spread too thin: the play has 16 major characters. As elements of a larger story they function beautifully, but as individuals, though likeable, they seem mere sketches, not the fully-drawn figures of Shakespeare. The leader of the Kauravas, for example, is no match for Macbeth as a figure with some good tendencies who nevertheless ends up playing the villain. In general, the relationship between the feuding cousins is complicated, but not complex: in this version, there is something of the storybook simplicity of a George Lucas film, even though some dilemmas are raised in a more grown-up fashion.

The exception to this overriding simplicity is the character of Krishna. His paradoxical double nature as god and man, moral instructor and Odysseus-like manipulator, forms the drama's enigmatic center.

The subtext of the Brook *Mahabharata* lies in its concern with death and the possibility of apocalypse. One character proclaims, "This age is the age of destruction,"

and there are fearful, magical weapons on both sides that, if used, could mean an end to mankind. This helps explain the deceitful ruses used by Krishna to help the Pandavas to victory. Questioned about this afterward, he pleads *realpolitik*: The Pandavas were "the world's only light," he says. "I fought against terrible powers and I did what I could."

It's possible to detect something of Peter Brook in Krishna, stage manager of history, both a proponent of noble ideas and a tough-minded pragmatist. Brook is a searcher who also resembles the main figure in his film about Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, described by the director this way: "His primary situation is a hunger for understanding and a recognition that the answers the world has given him in no way satisfy his demand." The Brook *Mahabharata*, magnificent as it is, is more a summary of past explorations than a movement in a new direction. Brook never stands still for long. Less than a month after the *Mahabharata* company moves on to Australia, Brook will return to the Majestic with an English-language production of *The Cherry Orchard*. Brook has already staged the play in Paris; this time in New York, with a cast featuring Linda Hunt, Brian Dennehy and Erland Josephson, he will no doubt, once again, try out a few changes.

Rob Silberman teaches film and other subjects at the University of Minnesota.

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China syndrome

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mouse on the door; the young emperor's romp under golden-lit silken sheets with both his consorts; the sultry decadence of a leather-clad, opium-smoking spy who lounges on a plush canopy bed; ballroom and party scenes so encrusted with ceremony you can hardly find the people—they're all moments that combine excess and emptiness.

But they just don't add up to drama. Psychologically, *The Last Emperor* is centerless, because, as Bertolucci has read Pu Yi's plight, the story is about a psyche frozen in infancy, battered by circumstance, then thawed by a blast from outside. "Change" is something that hits Pu Yi like a ton of bricks. Caught in the plush folds around the empty core of Pu Yi's life, the film never dallies with the turmoil that keeps hurling new affronts at him.

Bertolucci, as Peter Bondanella describes him in his excellent *Italian Cinema from Neorealism to the Present* (published by Ungar), sublimates his own personal psychological crises through film. *The Last Emperor* is a vivid testimony to his artistry and his despair at encountering the key to social action. Pu Yi is pathetic, but he's pathetic in the grand style.

Never grow up: If Bertolucci is an artist fighting a Peter Pan syndrome, then Steven Spielberg is Peter Pan. Or he was, quite happily, for years. Spielberg played with movies like children play with toy trains. His canny, kiddie-enthusiastic repackaging of movie gambits could make them seem new again. His greatest empathy has been reserved for innocent boy-children in jeopardy. In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *E.T.*, prepubescent boys

formed alliances with gentle, white-light-pure aliens against the cruelty of ordinary adulthood.

With commercial success, fatherhood and marriage, with the aging of his movie-brat gang and the coolness of traditional Hollywood to that crowd, Spielberg's been pushed out of his Peter Pan pose. But it's not an easy transition. *The Color Purple* was his self-conscious foray into a "people" movie, led by characters who change. It was a well-intentioned, Disney-cartoon travesty of Alice Walker's uneven but exhorting novel.

Boy's adventure: Now the movie industry's Peter Pan has soared off a cliff, with *Empire of the Sun*. The subject of J.G. Ballard's semi-autobiographical novel—an English boy growing up under genteel enclave life in Shanghai is thrown into a Japanese World War II internment camp—is like Spielberg's worst nightmare of instant adulthood.

From an expert at horror and boyish sentimentality on screen, and from a man confronting his own flight from growing up, you might expect a powerful, even terrifying film. What's surprising, then, about *Empire of the Sun* is how formless, dull and dreary it is.

The script, by witty black-humorist playwright Tom Stoppard, oddly lacks punch, perhaps sabotaged by the gigantic, spectacular scenes of wartime chaos alternating with luminous interludes in which the young boy (Christian Bale) flees from reality in his love of flying. Some moments are technically dazzling, particularly the crowd and bombing scenes. But they're show-off episodes of controlled technique. And for all the trouble Spielberg went to to film in Shanghai, the city ends up a backdrop.

Survival and betrayal: The theme threading through the film is trust betrayed, affection

denied. The boy can't help admiring the Japanese for their courage and aeronautic skill. He clings to anyone who will serve as a role model, even an opportunistic American hustler (John Malkovich). The boy solicitously cares for English friends of his parents in camp (the wife played by Miranda Richardson) who are immersed in their own clammy despair. The final betrayal comes when his Japanese friend, a fighter pilot, is killed by Americans in the act of offering him a precious piece of fruit. By the time his mother finds him again he's got a bleak and hard-bitten face, full of distrust. He's survived, but he hasn't grown up, only old.

The film is relentlessly told from the boy's viewpoint, but the contradictions he's caught in keep tripping up the story. His enclave life is not just coddled but riddled with the arrogance of colonial privilege. He's troubled by the contrast just outside his door, but Spielberg doesn't know what to do with the boy's unease. Those scenes make only a muffled comment on the unfeeling betrayal of adults who fail to prepare privileged children for the brutality around them.

This is a lonely film, in which the boy grabs for scraps of attention and affection where he can find them, and valiantly makes do where he can't—learning to eat weevils for dinner, to risk his life so Americans can bet on it from their bunks, to have his private dreams aimed at the sky.

It's lonely, but not terrifying. Spielberg stays safely on the blank surface of emotional rejection, as if afraid to confront it. And so lurking fear and grim endurance become the ostinato themes of the movie. Boy and audience alike have to find their way ploddingly to the light the atom bomb brings to end the film. ■
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By Susan J. Douglas

H EY, BOYS, WOULD YOU POLITICAL analysts pul-eeze stop boring us with all those dry technical details about the summit talks? Who cares about that? Haven't you seen the front pages and the nightly news? The TV networks, the major newspapers and their intrepid girl reporters know the real story here. What the American people want to know, need to know, is whether Nancy and Raisa got into a good, old-fashioned cat fight. Whose clothes were nicer, anyway? Is Raisa still wearing that tacky blue eyeshadow she had on in Geneva? Which first lady was bitchier? That's what's at issue here; our collective futures depend on the answers. Fortunately, we in America have a free press that gets to the heart of the matter and highlights what's really important.

After wasting all too much time—as much as two minutes, I think—on the so-called “substance” of the talks, ABC and CBS, the two networks I watched on December 9, finally got down to business. First we saw Nancy and Raisa posing for the press, putting on their sweetest Krystle Carrington smiles. But our hard-hitting, investigative press wasn't fooled by that! The cameras (which don't lie) immediately zoomed in to Nancy's hands as she physically tried to shove Raisa out of the limelight and steer her inside for her White House tour. Raisa is one tough cookie, though—she wasn't going to let that capitalist mannequin push her around. But let's not forget who's the Marxist here; and we Americans know they don't have any class at all.

Hogging the spotlight: Raisa refused to go inside; she wanted to hog the spotlight some more; Raisa wanted to keep talking to reporters face to face. The nerve of her! Doesn't she know about protocol, that you only yell to reporters from a helicopter? But, you see, Raisa was determined, as the *New York Times* noted on its front page, to “upstage” her hostess.

In CBS' probing exposé on the summit, Lesley Stahl revealed that it had taken Mrs. G. two weeks (the audacity of it!) to respond to Nancy's White House invite. Even worse, last year that conniving commie agreed with Nancy that neither of them would go to Reykjavik, and then Raisa showed up anyway, in her best outfits, too, while Nancy was stuck at home, “fuming,” according to Stahl, completely outfoxed! Boy, you've got to watch those Soviets all the time—they're so wily—especially the women—once they've had a little taste of power and a new wardrobe.

But Stahl also assured us that this little ploy may have backfired on Raisa back home, where, as the CBS reporter emphasized, “chauvinism and communism go hand in hand.”



GOSSIP



Media main event: Raisa vs. Nancy

Whew, thank God that's not true of capitalism! Anyhow, the Russians didn't like Raisa's showing up in Iceland because it suggested that Mrs. G. “wears the pants” in the family. But then, the press reminded us, so does Nancy: They *both* wear the pants in the family. They're both “strong-willed,” boss their husbands around way too much—as bad as Alexis on *Dynasty*—and actually (get this, what a scoop) kept Ron and Gorby waiting a full 10 minutes while they finished up their little chat over tea.

Can you imagine—while Nancy told Raisa how she could get Russians to “Just Say Nyet” to vodka—“the two most powerful men in the world,” according to the *New York Daily News*, had to “cool their heels.” It's women like this, too big for their britches, who get into cat fights in the first place and jeopardize the delicate negotiations it's taken the men years to finesse.

Fashion casualties: But I'm getting ahead of myself. There's so much more, the media remind us, that's momentous about this story. First of all, did you get a load of that outfit Raisa had on? Neither *USA Today* nor the *Times* let her get away with that grotesque diplomatic *faux pas*. A black cocktail dress and—how low can you go—sagging black stockings with rhinestones on them—during the day! Can you stand it? How will we ever reduce the nuclear threat in the face of gaffes like this?

Fortunately for world peace, Nancy had on her cunning little Oscar

de la Renta, so some progress was made. But since our press is balanced and objective, it reported how Nancy, too, put detente at risk. Reporters asked her, only four or five times during the morning, the question on which Soviet-U.S. rapprochement hinges: “Is it true you two girls don't get along?” Nancy responded indignantly that she had answered that question “I think, five times,” and then insisted that there were other, more substantively important issues on the table. Touchy, touchy, touchy. Do we see a few raging hormones here? Boy, these women—you start to ask a few probing questions and they get all emotional on you.

It was during the White House tour

museum! What a dig! And not just to Nancy, but to all patriotic Americans. Then, to make matters worse, she assumed “a schoolteacher tone” and “peppered Mrs. Reagan with questions as if the First Lady were a graduate student facing an oral examination.”

Red tricksters: First question? Raisa, that scheming Marxist-Leninist, went for the jugular. “When was the White House built?” Brother, leave it to a woman with an advanced degree to try to show off and make other women around her look bad. And boy, was Nancy pissed, 'cause she didn't know the answer. Now *this* is the stuff of history.

But it was *USA Today* that worked harder, dug deeper, than

Our hard-hitting investigative press wasn't fooled by the Krystle Carrington smiles. The cameras (which don't lie) immediately zoomed in on Nancy's hands as she physically tried to shove Raisa out of the limelight.

when Raisa and Nancy nearly scratched each other's eyes out. Raisa wasn't very ladylike at all. Instead, revealed the *Times*, she “was just assertive enough to give some listeners the impression that she was sparring.” Obviously green with envy, since most Russians have to live in apartments the size of our refrigerator cartons, Raisa cattily dismissed the White House as a

museum! They went beyond the staged events like the tour; they tracked down new sources. They really got behind-the-scenes for their readers. And what a story! Behind the sniping of the tour, there were, if you knew where to look, hints of possible reconciliation.

Who was shrewd enough to detect these signs? Why, Julius Bengston, Nancy's hairdresser of 20

years. While the first ladies might seem, at first glance, worlds apart, “when it comes to hair, they're closer to detente.” They were both “perfectly coiffed, not a hair out of place.” And Raisa has made some important concessions. Her hair, which was “too severe” in Geneva, is now “much softer,” which is good, since, Bengston insists, she's “no glamour puss.” But I don't know about this story. Even though *USA Today* did break new journalistic ground, I'm still skeptical. Like other Americans with inquiring minds, I still have to ask: What about the shoving? What about those dagger-filled glares?

It's obvious that there were big problems with this summit and that the girls need to meet again soon to resolve their differences. But next time, let's stop this pussyfooting around. Let's can these wimpy, Jackie Kennedy style tours of the White House. The American people don't want this and neither do the press. I've got my hopes up for a hair-pulling, eye-scratching, rolling-around-on-the-ground tussle that ends up with them falling into the Reflecting Pond together. Or how about mud wrestling? Yeah, that's it. First Lady mud wrestling. In the Rose Garden. Prime Time. That'll settle things once and for all. The winner gets a weekend at La Costa, a free day's shopping on Rodeo Drive and all the missiles she wants for the little man. And we can all rest a little easier. ■
Susan J. Douglas teaches media studies at Hampshire College.

Welfare

Continued from page 3

guaranteeing that the so-called "welfare" problems will not be alleviated.

More generally, the poverty and pathology of the ghetto reflect broader economic trends: the overall decline in real income throughout society since 1973, the rising baseline level of unemployment, the wave of plant closings (which disproportionately hurt blacks), the devastation of deindustrialization (hitting hardest the industries in which blacks were beginning to hold decent jobs), and the flight of manufacturing from the central cities.

But instead of focusing on the conditions that produced high joblessness and poverty, leading to more female-headed families and a tangle of socially destructive developments in the inner city black ghetto, politicians and the public have been led to focus

on the behavior of poor blacks.

Moynihan is rightfully distressed at the destruction of the black family. Following most people's experience, he sees the family as the essential building block of society. It is more accurate to see families as units generated by the whole kinship system (in turn subordinated to the economy in our society). So when the pool of marriageable men shrinks for black women or when the economic props of marriage collapse, the kinship system malfunctions. Families tend not to be created or maintained.

Yet Moynihan's bill starts with an assertion of family financial responsibility, leaving it to the government to supplement that whenever it falls short. Support for two-parent families is a reasonable objective; it need not involve prejudice against other families. Enforcing child support by absent fathers who can pay something is also reasonable.

Real reform: But the most effective thing

government can do to strengthen the family and to change the social pathologies of the ghetto is to change the economic conditions for families, then work on reforming behavior.

Some short-term measures would be needed even under the best conditions. The experience of a few states with their workfare plans provides the foundation for the current reform bills. But to the extent they've been successful—and the verdict is still out on the best test, Massachusetts—the programs "should not be expected to produce massive reductions in the welfare rolls," the federal General Accounting Office concluded. They work best when they focus on the minority of long-term recipients, when they provide lots of education and assistance (and thus are not cheap), and when they function within a market that has abundant good-paying job openings. When programs have something to offer, they attract volunteers

and don't need to be mandatory.

Sociologist Fred Block, in his contribution to *The Mean Season* on "Rethinking the Political Economy of the Welfare State," argues that despite the vaunted job creation of recent decades, the economy still has not generated jobs quickly enough to absorb the expanding labor force. Pushing more people into the job market, especially at low wages, produces the wrong results, encouraging business to substitute labor for capital and not to develop the high-wage jobs the nation needs.

Maintaining higher government income support payments (that would push up wages and keep some people out of the labor market) and reducing the overall work year could spur needed changes, such as forcing employers to adopt less authoritarian ways of managing. Block's strategy would have to be part of comprehensive economic change, but it highlights another reason why the current welfare reform is an upside-down, counterproductive strategy.

Wilson argues that what the poor need is not a targeted plan but a basic change in economic policy. That certainly should contain several elements, including raising the minimum wage and guaranteeing health coverage for all workers. Such a program should also contain some version of the European "family allowance"—even an expanded income tax deduction for children would help—and a national child-care plan for all families, with sliding scales of fees. It should further include tax reform to relieve state and federal burdens on the poor as well as extended unemployment compensation—because now only one-third of the unemployed are covered. A comprehensive labor-market adjustment policy, systematically aiding displaced workers of all income levels, should be another element. Beyond that there is a need for federal credit, trade and industrial policies to maintain "community full employment."

The political key to all of these proposals, as Wilson and others argue, is that they provide benefits to the vast majority of workers. Consequently, they, like Social Security, would have a broader base of support, would not be stigmatized and would be better run. Costs can be controlled by scaling some benefits or fees to income, but costs will also be recouped with a better functioning economy and more progressive taxation. In the long run, the poor will benefit most from these policies.

It is obvious that most people want to work, and it makes sense for the sake of both poor people and society to make sure that they can work—and earn a decent living doing so. There will, however, always be some people who can't and shouldn't work. In the current welfare debate, advocates of forcing welfare mothers with young children into the workforce have tried to argue that other women with children work, so why shouldn't welfare mothers? But fewer than one-third of married women with young children work on a full-time, year-round basis, and they have husbands to help them a little. Of course, there are also people with disabilities who need help, all at a more generous level than at present.

But in general, the left and right seem to agree: replace welfare. Whereas the right would supplant it with the cruelties of the market, the left offers a broad buffer against marketplace vagaries for all workers. That solves the fetishized "welfare problem." It also deals with the real welfare problem: poverty.

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The Last Emperor

Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci

Empire of the Sun

Directed by Steven Spielberg

By Pat Aufderheide

FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON TWO EPICS SET AND filmed in mainland China—newly open to Western filmmakers—are on display: Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* and Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*. There's plenty to watch in both of them, but much less to feel. Spectacles full of set-pieces and action, they are strangely devoid of drama. They both feature characters who grow old before they grow up.

Bernardo Bertolucci is a foremost member of the inheritor generation to Italian neorealism, whose intellectual roots run through Freud and Marx. His early work was enmeshed with the history of late '60 social ferment in Europe. His mentor was Pier Paolo Pasolini; Jean-Luc Godard was both inspiration and goad.

Whether art-house or splashily mainstream, obscure or all too obvious, his work has a central theme: how can an individual or a society change? He starts from the vantage point of a bourgeois self cursed by being born into the "wrong" class, and of an adult struggling with the chains of childhood ties. His films are obsessed with Freudian themes of parent-child relationships and political themes of class and intraclass conflict.

He may never have more succinctly expressed himself than in the gloomy *Spider's Strategem*. In that film, made in the wake of 1968 student revolts, a young man returns to his martyred leftist father's home town to discover the ugly truth: His father was a sell-out. Finally

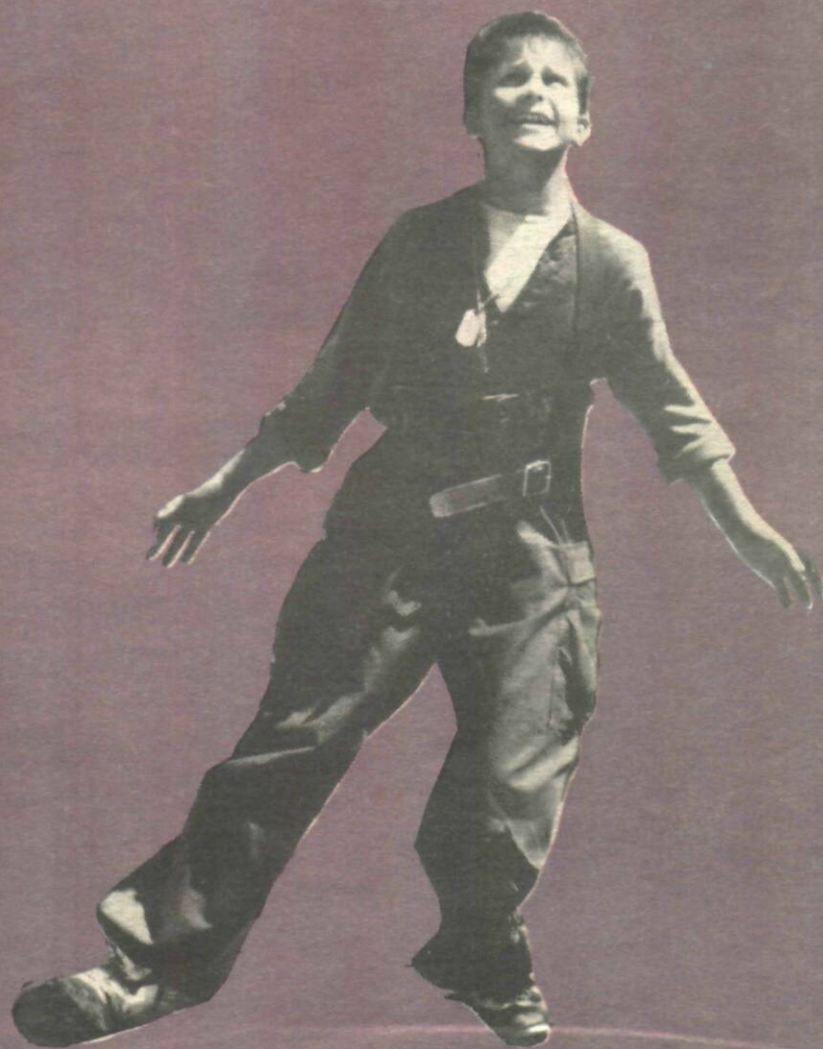
he is stranded in his father's stifling backwater. Personally and politically, he ends up betrayed and abandoned in his search for roots and a future.

Bertolucci's later work, usually with superlative cinematographer Vittorio Storaro (he filmed *Apocalypse Now* and *Reds*), intensified the theme of despair with self-discovery, especially in the psychosexual debacle *Last Tango in Paris*. In that film, two strangers in a womblike room try to recreate human relationships on primordial sexual passion alone.

He also developed an ability to mount pageant and spectacle, especially in *1900*, in which he aimed to dramatize the passion of social conflict in Italy and achieved overblown but compelling melodrama. He's been far better at evoking flesh-creeping decadence than in finding an interlock between individual and social change.

No wonder Bertolucci, who hasn't made a film in six years, since several international commercial failures in a row, was so attracted to the story of Pu Yi, the last emperor of China. Pu Yi's pathetic life is like a case study in the theme that preoccupies Bertolucci: the struggle of people born into a sterile social milieu and fearful of leaving the womb to act in the world.

Emperor too late: Pu Yi, born in 1905, became emperor at three, a prisoner unbeknownst to himself at seven, and was rudely thrown out of imperial splendor at the age of 19. With a leg up from the Japanese, he cavorted as a playboy until he accepted a role as puppet emperor of Japanese-controlled Manchuria. After World War II he spent five years in a Siberian prison, then a decade under Chinese re-education. He lived out the remainder of his life until 1967 as a humble gardener, staying out of sight of Cultural Revolutionaries. The virtual fairy-tale of his re-education became part of revolutionary China's folklore.



THE PETER PAN IN CHINA SYNDROME

BERTOLUCCI, SPIELBERG AND THE CHILDREN OF EMPIRE



Bertolucci says he found Pu Yi's story so compelling because the emperor was a "victim of history." "He is like a clinical Freudian case because at the age of three he is made 'The Son of Heaven'.... He didn't want to grow up because the childhood had been the all-powerful being," Bertolucci says in press materials. "He never becomes totally free until the end of his life. I am fascinated by the story of a man's metamorphosis."

He also claims to be fascinated by China, an ancient civilization that transformed itself. As he told John Powers in the *L.A. Weekly*, "The Chinese believe in history and change. *The Last Emperor* tells a story about the change of a society." That's so important to Bertolucci because of the collapse of his own and European film's historical mission: "I used to feel part of a movement," he told Powers. "The cinema was something to be reinvented. But then cinema as an industry absorbed all the new things and used it to rejuvenate commercial cinema." He found himself again stranded in the backwaters of historical change. But for all his talk of change and transformation, Bertolucci always seems much more interested in the impossibility of overcoming the obstacles to it. He is obsessively fascinated by decadence as the expression of those obstacles.

That is what *The Last Emperor* puts on display, and an impressive display it is. Bertolucci got permission to film in the imperial Forbidden City and to mount, there and elsewhere in China, extravagant interpretations of the sterile imperial splendor of Pu Yi's pre-revolutionary life as a Son of Heaven.

Stasis and spectacle: Despite Bertolucci's claims, this is not a movie about change, either in a society or a man. Pu Yi (as an adult, played with real poignancy by John Lone, who himself grew up in the hermetic world of Peking Opera), ultimately and gingerly steps out onto an ordinary urban street—but that's hardly a

transformation. You're looking at the remnants of a life lived improbably, extravagantly, and pointlessly. Rather, Bertolucci does what he does best: He revels in the torment of the infant coddled into incapacity for adulthood, the individual rendered incapable of becoming a social being. And he bathes that pathos in spectacle.

Spectacle is not something to be sniffed at, however, in *The Last Emperor*. Bertolucci's, Storaro's, and production designer Ferdinando Scarfioiti's talent make it a film buff's dream—for the furniture alone; for the color-coding and elaborate theatrics of light alone; for the costumes alone; for the lush moments that so often have to do with a sense of loss.

The vistas of the Forbidden City (never before filmed by a Westerner), restored by Scarfioiti's freewheelingly opulent interpretation of how it looked at its lushest to a spoiled, dazzled, helpless child, have to shock a viewer into delight. Those who watched Hong Kong filmmaker Li Han-chiang's turgid two-part historical epic *The Burning of the Imperial Palace/Reign behind the Curtain*, filmed in the Forbidden City in 1983; or the visually-flat mainland Chinese film *The Last Empress* (also telling the saga of Pu Yi, though with a far more interesting narrative), will not be prepared for *The Last Emperor*.

Excess and emptiness: Throughout the film, from the Forbidden City to playboy villa to Manchukuo headquarters, a non-story (from a script by Mark Peploe with Bertolucci) is draped and stuffed magnificently, grandiloquently, imperially. Many moments evoke the suffocation of luxury, addiction and pageantry without substance. The child's desperate rush after his mother, only to be rebuked at the massive gates of the Forbidden City, as he leaves his mark by smashing a pet

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